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WINNING BUDDHA'S SMILE

CHARLES M. TAYLOR

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WINNING BUDDHA'S SMILE

A Korean Legend

ADAPTED AND TRANSLATED BY
CHARLES M. TAYLOR

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TO

MY MOTHER

WHOSE DESERVING FAR OUTSTRIPS
MY POWERS OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT

FOREWORD

Many of the best portions of Chinese literature are readily obtainable in an English dress. From time to time bits of Japanese literature pass before English-reading eyes. But Korean literature remains, as it has remained for years back, virtually a thing unknown and unappreciated.

"Winning Buddha's Smile" is one of the oldest existing specimens of Korean literature. Both the author and date of its original composition are unknown, but it is reasonably certain that it was well known in a dramatic form about the close of the fourteenth century.

At one time when religious dissension was rife on the peninsula, many of the monuments of a rich and abundant literature, especially those tinged with Buddhistic doctrines and thought, were consigned to the bonfire. In some manner, our legend escaped this wholesale literary destruction, and it is here presented to English readers with the hope that it will meet with an indulgent reception by the ever-widening circle of those who take an interest in the things of other peoples and other lands.

The translator is indebted to a French version of the original text, made by the Korean scholar, Hong-Jong-Ou, which was published under the auspices of the Musée Guimet. He has attempted to preserve the simple, child-like form of the narrative and has made few alterations in it, and these only when clearness and the English idiom required them.

C. M. T.

KOREANS WHOSE FOOTSTEPS CROSS THE PATHS OF OUR LEGEND

SUN-YEN, the Benevolent, whose Virtue and Goodness lead him from Prosperity through Adversity unto Prosperity again.

CHENG-SI, the Fair, his daughter.

SAN-HOUNI, a scholar and friend of Sun-Yen.

YENG-SI, the scholar's wife.

SAN-SYENG, the scholar's son, whose Merit findeth pleasure in the sight of Heaven and taketh him unto High Offices.

JA-JO-MI, the Unscrupulous, Prime Minister of Korea.

KI-SI, the young Prince of Korea.

SU-RUNG, a murderer and thief.

SU-YENG, the robber's brother, a goodly man by way of contrast.

YENG-SO-YEI, a daughter of Korea.

OU-PUNG, a Sister of Religion and a follower of the True Path.

HONG-JUN, an innkeeper.

I

WINNING BUDDHA'S SMILE

I

IN the far away days of the olden time when the earth was still in its childhood and when the city of Hpyeng-Yang was the capital of Korea, there was numbered among its inhabitants a high dignitary of the Court, Sun-Yen by name, who owed his exalted position solely to his intelligence and capability.

Although very rich, Sun-Yen looked down upon no one. On the contrary, he sought diligently to help all those who came within his sphere of influence. His greatest happiness lay in alleviating the sorrows of others. He was, therefore, beloved by the people who saw in Sun-Yen a most disinterested protector in whom they had absolute confidence.

Now one day, all things changed as all things sometimes do. Fortune, so long favorable to Sun-Yen, forsook him. Formerly happy and influential, our friend (for call him such we will) was to become the most unfortunate and the most miserable of men. It was due to the following circumstances.

The King of Korea was giving a grand and sumptuous banquet to the Governors of the various provinces and the ladies of the Court. The occasion was a very merry one. Shouts of joy and the chords of harmonious music were heard on all sides. When Sun-Yen was informed of this, instead of rejoicing with the others, he became a prey to great sadness. To get away from his own thoughts, he resolved to go visit his friend, San-Houni, one of the greatest scholars of Korea. So Sun-Yen, the benevolent, set out accompanied by his servant—a faithful and trusted fellow.

While on his way thither, his attention was suddenly drawn to a great crowd of people by the roadside. "Go, see what is the matter," he said to his servant. The latter hastened—as all good servants do—to obey his master's orders. He made a way through the crowd which had gathered and soon learned the reason for the gathering.

They were about to carry away several people who had died by the highway. As soon as the servant saw this ghastly spectacle he returned to his master and told him what had taken place. Sun-Yen was profoundly moved when he heard it but, losing no time in passive sympathy, he summoned a police agent, of whom he demanded, "Do you know what caused the death of those unfortunates?"

"Yes, sir, they died of hunger."

"Why not carry them away then instead of leaving them there on the road?" continued Sun, in a tone of reproach.

"I was about to do exactly as you suggest, sir," said the agent, who, with a quickened step, went toward the group which by this time had increased materially.

Sun did not continue on his way to see his friend, San-Houni. He went direct to the Palace and was immediately ushered into the presence of the King.

The monarch accorded Sun a hearty welcome, saying, "It has been a very long time since I have had the pleasure of having you come to see me."

"Sire," replied Sun-Yen, "I rarely leave the comfort of my humble home."

"And what is it that keeps you so close at home?"

"Sire, either my duties or sickness. The reason I have come to see you to-day is because I have a very important revelation to make to you. Several of your subjects have just died of starvation by the roadside. The thing at first appeared incredible to me. I could not believe that, if my King knew the sad conditions in which so many of his people are living, he would give himself up to pleasure as you are doing. However, I have secured the evidence. Just a few moments ago, I saw with my own eyes three wretches who had died from want of food."

These words seemed deeply to impress the King

who, with a trace of emotion in his voice, inquired of Sun, "Tell me, what should be done? I can scarcely believe that this misfortune took place while I was leading this life of idleness and pleasure."

"Sire," continued Sun-Yen respectfully, "here lies the source of the whole trouble. Who pays the expenses of your amusements? Your people and no one else, and the Governors instead of doing their duty are also leading a frivolous and even vicious life. You can believe the words of your old servant whose devotion to your interests you are well aware of."

"I thank you for this frankness," rejoined the King, "but candidly I can hardly credit what you have just told me. I shall look more fully into this affair."

At these words, Sun left his sovereign and went home and told his wife what he had done—the mark of a dutiful husband.

"You acted nobly," she said, "but my intuition tells me that your devotion to the King will cost you dearly."

"Why?" asked Sun.

"The King will not follow your advice. This is the course things are going to take, mark my words. The Governors, forewarned by your complaint, will not allow themselves to be injured and their pleasures curtailed, and upon you their anger will surely fall. Yes, I fear the consequences of to-day's work."

"Reassure yourself, my dear, the King took my words in a very good spirit and he has never yet made light of my advice."

"I hope with all my heart that you are right. Let us see what time will bring forth."

The King in reality did change his way of living. His conduct made him a bit remorseful. He promptly followed up Sun's complaint and summoned his Prime Minister.

This official, who was named Ja-Jo-Mi, came immediately. He was a man whose severity of character and conduct had earned for him a terrible reputation. Although no one knew of it, he had conceived the scheme of usurping the throne but up to the present time had revealed his intentions to nobody.

The King demanded of his Minister, "Have you nothing new to tell me?"

"Absolutely nothing, sire."

At these words, the King cried in an excited voice, "What, you, the Prime Minister, and you do not know that several of my people have just died by the roadside and that their death was caused from lack of food? If there is any one who should be well informed about what is going on in my Kingdom, it should certainly be you."

"Sire, from whom did you get this news?"

"From Sun-Yen."

"Ah, I can scarcely understand how this can be.

I have just received the reports from the police and I did not see a single word on the subject of this affair, therefore, I am quite astounded."

"However that may be," said the King, "I command that this evening's fete shall not continue an instant longer."

"Your orders shall be executed. Sire, as soon as I have carried them out I shall return to my office and secure what testimony I can about this matter. The guilty parties shall have their just deserts."

Bowing humbly before the monarch, Ja-Jo-Mi withdrew. A few minutes later and the Palace, which formerly echoed to the shouts of merrymaking, was in complete silence.

The Prime Minister, upon retiring to his office gave himself up to reflection upon the situation. He was greatly troubled because he feared that he might be removed from his office by the revelations of Sun-Yen. "That fellow is an infernal nuisance and might bring down the King's wrath upon my head. To prevent a recurrence of such things there is but one thing to be done—to get rid of him by sending him into exile. With this dangerous fool out of the way, nothing, nor nobody, can oppose me in the execution of my ambitious designs and I can easily secure the throne."

Such in substance were the reflections of the Prime Minister, but it would be necessary to find a pre-

text for the exile of Sun and Ja-Jo-Mi, the clever, was not long in devising a scheme.

He resolved to write a letter to San-Houni full of bitter criticisms and threats against the King. This letter he would sign with the name of Sun-Yen. Then he would place it in the King's hands with the story that it had been found on the road by a police agent.

No sooner said than done. The letter was written. Ja-Jo-Mi, adopting a disguise, left his home and, dropping the missive in the path of an agent of police, passed on in the darkness of the Korean night. When the agent walked by he picked up the letter and naturally glanced around but there was no one in sight. He carried the note directly to his chief so that the latter could look over the contents and restore it to its owner.

The Chief of Police read the letter through with great astonishment. Desiring to give a proof of his zeal, he ran to the palace and in a mysterious manner demanded an immediate audience with the King. The monarch had the Chief of Police brought to him at once and was given the forged letter. One can well imagine the surprise of the King. Anxious for light upon the amazing situation he again called his Prime Minister.

Ja-Jo-Mi, the clever, came with dispatch. The King passed over to him the malicious letter, asking

if he believed that Sun-Yen was really the author. The Prime Minister pretended to read the communication. He saw that the King was in a state of uncertainty and he determined to take advantage of it in order to ruin Sun-Yen, once and for all time.

"Sire," he said, "it often happens that we are deceived by those whom we deem most faithful. As far as Sun is concerned, I consider him perfectly capable of this infamous business. I have known for a long while that he has been thinking and dreaming of taking your place on the throne. As for the annoyance which he caused you a short time ago, he was the principal instigator of that himself."

"That's enough, my faithful Ja-Jo-Mi. Have Sun thrown into prison. He will be tried immediately."

The Prime Minister, rejoicing over his triumph, had Sun-Yen taken into custody. When the King was informed of his arrest he went personally to interview the prisoner.

"Do you recognize this?" he shouted in rage, holding out the letter.

Words fail to give an idea of Sun's astonishment. He realized that he was the victim of a devilish plot but such was his stupefaction that he could utter nothing in his own defense. He burst into tears.

The King continued: "I would never have believed this of you."

"Sire, I know nothing of this," wailed the wretched Sun.

These words irritated the King.

"Ah, you understand nothing," he cried. "Tell me, then, who is the writer of this letter?"

"In any case, it was not I, sire."

"Of course. Now just listen to me. You have heard the proverb about the smoke?"

"Yes, sire."

"Well, you know where there is smoke there is fire. I mean by this that if you had not been moved by evil intentions, you would not have addressed this letter to your friend."

"Sire, I see whence comes this evil. The revelations which I recently made to you have stirred up hatred in the hearts of certain personages who desire to bring about my ruin. There's a black heart at work. I swear to you that I am innocent."

"So that's all you have to say for yourself? That's enough."

The King withdrew, leaving Sun in despair. He ordered the Prime Minister to banish Sun at once and designated his place of exile as Kang-Sin. San-Houni, who was also compromised in the plot, was exiled to Ko-Kum-To.

Escorted to his home by an agent of police, Sun told his wife what had happened. The unfortunate woman was prostrated with grief.

"What did I tell you the other day," she said to her husband, but she soon gained control of herself and regarded the misfortune which had fallen on both of them in a calm light.

"Let us be resigned, my dear. Doubtless it will be painful to live so far from our King and our friends but at least we shall have peace in the future."

Without delay, they busied themselves with preparations for the departure. Sun summoned a few poor families to whom he distributed the little money he possessed.

'Twas but a short while and the moment to leave was at hand. Sun-Yen and his wife found it hard to break away from the embraces of their relatives and weeping friends.

Here endeth the first step of our legend.

11

II

THE journey of Sun-Yen and his wife to the Island of Kang-Sin was uneventful and they were soon alone in their new home. Their guards then returned to the capital.

What especially troubled Sun was the idea that his wife might be lonely and depressed in this isolated place. He spoke of this to her but she replied with a great deal of cheerfulness, "Do not trouble yourself about me. I have decided to follow you wherever you may go and I shall never find the time wearisome so long as I am with you"—the mark of a dutiful wife.

As a matter of fact, the days passed for our two exiles just as quickly as if they had been living among their relatives and friends. Very soon signs of Spring were to be seen. So Sun said to his wife one day:

"Spring time has come, it is a delightful day. Let us take advantage of it and go for a little outing."

"With pleasure, my dear."

"Good, let us climb the mountain if we can."

They set out gaily. On seeing them one would

never have thought they were the victims of Fate. They enjoyed to the fullness of their hearts the charm of the landscape which lay about them, and happiness was in their souls. Madame Sun was overflowing with joy.

"How peaceful everything is," said she to her husband. "It is a real pleasure to be walking here alone with you. When we lived at the Capital I was never able to accompany you in your walks."

"You are right. I was forced to conform to the customs of the country."

"Now we are at the foot of the mountain," she continued. "What a beautiful panorama lies before us. Just look at it. I feel a poetic instinct within me. Listen to these verses:

> The day is beautiful; amid the shrubs
> Are fragrant blossoms, clustered in sweet sleep,
> The butterflies that seek them eagerly
> Seem poised to count each rain-bow tinted leaf.
> And stupid with the heat the serpent lies
> Stretched lazily along the languid boughs.
> Among the reeds that tremble in the wind,
> Deliberate leaps the frog, while swallows pass
> Bearing the insect-prisoners to their nests."

"Do you know," she mused, "these animals are happier than we."

"What makes you say that?" queried Sun.

"Because they have little ones to care for while we have no children."

"Console yourself, my dear, we are not yet so old that Heaven may not smile upon us. Have confidence in the future. But I think it is time to return. The sun is going down and you must be tired."

The two returned slowly to their home, lost in thought.

Now it came to pass one night that Sun's wife had a dream. She saw an angel from Heaven bending over her. She awoke, startled by the vividness of this vision, and immediately told her husband about it.

"Yes," said the latter, "that is very queer but I shouldn't worry about it. Fatigue has caused this nightmare."

The truth was that this noble lady was soon to become a mother. In fact, it was not long before she gave birth to a daughter to whom they gave the name of Cheng-Si. Sun, the benevolent, was overwhelmed with joy—as one should be when Heaven smiles.

Unfortunately, his wife lay seriously ill. It was soon evident that there was no hope of saving her. Scarcely three days had passed after the birth of little Cheng-Si when her mother died. She sensed the approach of death and whispered weakly to her husband:

"My dear, I am going to leave you. I know that your grief will be very great but do not give your-

self up to it. You must look after our little one. Get a nurse for her if you can."

With a supreme effort the dying woman clasped her baby to her breast.

"Alas," she said with a deep sigh, "this is the last time I shall have you so near me."

Sun, in tones of deepest sorrow, said to his wife:

"Dearest wife, can it be true that you are going to leave me? We have always protected and shared with the unfortunate and yet the gods permit us to be parted. It is an injustice."

His wife did not hear his final words. Death had already touched her brow and called her to her ancestors. Sun saw but did not wish at first to believe.

He called to his wife, tears streaming down his cheeks, but, alas, his words were unanswered.

"Now, I am all alone," he cried in despair. "What will become of me and this child!"

He gazed fondly at his daughter who was still clasped to her mother's breast. This sad sight increased Sun's grief. He took the little baby and turned it over to the care of a nurse whom he managed to secure. Then, beside himself with grief, he busied himself with his wife's burial.

All this happened so quickly that Sun-Yen thought it had happened in a dream, but the sad evidence was there before his eyes. Each day he could be seen walking to the spot where his wife was sleeping.

These frequent visits merely aggravated his anguish and it was impossible for him to control himself.

Our friend was always in tears; he could get no rest nor sleep and shortly more ill fortune came to him. From having shed so many tears, Sun became blind.

This terrible blow almost prostrated him but he continued to drag out the same wretched existence. His greatest regret was in not being able to look upon the face of his little daughter. So passed several years.

* * * *

Meanwhile, Cheng-Si was growing up. She was now in her thirteenth year and was obliged to help support her poor father who was without resources of any kind. She had but one way to keep Sun from starving and that was by begging. She went about this sad task without any false modesty. Her wits, however, were not asleep and one day she said to her father:

"There is something which I do not understand."

"What is that, my child?"

"Father, how is it that so many other people can live with their relatives and friends while we are here all alone?"

"Ah, my daughter, it is very true that we must live by ourselves. But things were not always thus. There was a time when I lived at the Capital of

Korea with your poor mother and we were surrounded by many friends. I occupied a high position. Our family belonged to the highest nobility and was always in good standing at the Court of the King. But, one day, because of a malicious slander, of which the King thought me guilty, I was exiled here. My friend, San-Houni, was trapped in the same affair and was sent to Ko-Kum-To. He shares our downfall for he also comes from an excellent family. I am very sorry that since my arrival at this island I have had no news of my old friend."

"Perhaps it is not possible for him to communicate with you," said the child in order to console the old man. "Excuse me, father," she added, "it is time for me to go to work."

"Go, my child, and come home early."

Little Cheng-Si, the fair, walked at a rapid gait. She went first to the cemetery to pray a moment beside her mother's grave. Cheng-Si was just as industrious as she was intelligent. She gave up her nights to study, while during the day she went from door to door asking alms.

One day, she went as usual to pray by her mother's resting place. She remained there longer than usual and did not return home at the customary hour.

Sun, missing his daughter, was sorely troubled. At last, he resolved to go search for her. Leaning

on his cane, he started out slowly and feebly. Unfortunately, when he came to the edge of a pond close by his home, he made a false step and fell into the water. He groaned to himself, "This is certain death for me, and my poor little girl will hunt for me everywhere." And he began to shout lustily at the top of his voice.

Happily Sun-Yen's cries were heard by the disciple of an anchorite who lived in a cave on the mountain slope, a short distance from the lake. He came running and soon had Sun out of the water.

He demanded of him:

"Where do you live?"

"Right close by."

"But how is it that you, a blind man, go out alone? Don't you know that you are running a great risk in doing this?"

"Yes, I know it. I never do go out alone. Today, however, I ventured away from my home to hunt for my little girl. She did not return at her usual time so I went to look for her. That is how I came to fall into the lake from which I would never have come out alive without your assistance. You have saved my life."

"I have only done my duty," replied the disciple, humbly.

He took Sun by the arm and led him to his little dwelling. On the way, he asked of him:

"Will you have faith in what I am going to tell you?"

"Certainly."

"Well, I predict, indeed I can read in your face, that your evil days will not last forever. Within three years you shall recover your sight and you shall become Prime Minister. Your fortune also shall be unsurpassed. To attain this goal you must pray diligently to Chen-Houang (the Emperor of Heaven)."

"Have I heard you aright?" cried Sun, beside himself with astonishment and joy.

"Nothing can be nearer the truth," gravely replied the disciple.

"But what must I do? Tell me, tell me!"

"You must give me three hundred bags of rice and I will pray in your stead."

"Alas, I cannot give what you require of me."

"That doesn't make any difference. I do not ask for the immediate delivery of the three hundred bags of rice. It will be sufficient if you bind yourself in writing to pay me when you have the means to do so."

"I'll accept on those conditions," replied Sun.

The disciple passed over to him a paper on which the poor blind man placed his signature.

"I am obliged to leave you, now," said the disciple.

"Then, good-bye, until we meet again."

When he was alone, Sun reflected upon what the disciple had told him. The idea of seeing the sunlight again and of acquiring honor and wealth filled his very being with ecstasy. On the other hand, the obligation of furnishing three hundred sacks of rice considerably diminished his joy. A man, whose daughter was obliged to beg to keep him from starving, would never be able to fulfill the promise which he had signed. He regretted having given a promise which he could never hope to keep.

Sun was drawn from his reveries by the arrival of his daughter.

"Why so melancholy, father?" inquired the child. "Is it because I am late to-day that you seem sad? I must ask your pardon. I went to the cemetery and from there to gather some alms. They gave me some things to eat, as your hands can tell. Don't you forgive me?"

"My dear child, it is not you who makes me so sad. Listen, and I will tell you what happened to me. When you did not come home I was a little worried and wanted to go and meet you. On the way, I fell into the lake and gave myself up for lost when I was rescued by a disciple of an anchorite. This man led me home and said to me, while we were walking along, 'I predict to you that you will no longer be blind and that some day you will be-

come the King's Prime Minister.' But I have to pay him three hundred sacks of rice and I can never do it. That is why I am sad."

"Do not worry too much about that, father. We shall find a way that will enable you to keep your promise."

After they had shared their meagre meal the young girl went to her room where she began to reflect upon her father's story. Not succeeding in going to sleep, she went out to take a bath in the lake, after which she began to prepare the sacrifice table in the garden. She placed in the centre a vase filled with water, lighted the incense burner and two candles, one at each end, and began to pray to Heaven. Her prayers continued almost until daybreak.

Not until then did Cheng-Si go to her room. Exhausted with fatigue, she fell asleep almost immediately. She dreamed that an old man was saying to her, "Very shortly something is going to happen to you. Some one will cross your path who will make you an attractive proposal. Do not hesitate to accept, for it is an exceptional opportunity."

On awakening, the child recalled her dream and was pensive and thoughtful for a long while. In reality her dream was soon to come true. Some dreams do.

In the days of our story, Korean merchants in search of business were accustomed to make one trip a year across the Yellow Sea, which lies between China and Korea. The crossing was very difficult and dangerous because of the rapidity of the current in certain spots. After each trip they were always sure to report the loss of some boat. Thinking to avoid this danger, the merchants had recourse to a very ancient and very barbarous practice. In each village where they traded they purchased a young girl. These victims were thrown into the sea and the perils of the voyage were thought to be in this way forestalled.

Now, this day, Cheng-Si, the fair, had scarcely left her home when she met one of these traders in search of a human victim. The merchant asked the young girl if she knew where he could find what he wanted. To this request Cheng-Si replied:

"You need not look any farther. If you want to take me, I will go, but what will you give me in exchange for my life?"

"Anything that you want."

"Suppose I ask for three hundred bags of rice?"

"I'll accept the offer, but I have some partners and must consult with them, so I will not be able to give you a positive answer for a few days."

"I'll wait, then."

"Good-bye," said the merchant.

Happy at having concluded this bargain which was to result so seriously for her, the young girl impatiently awaited the merchant's return. One beautiful morning she saw him coming toward the house and immediately went to meet him.

"Has the affair been settled?" she asked him, without manifesting the least emotion.

"Yes, you shall have your three hundred bags of rice. Do you want them right away?"

"Yes, indeed, if I may. Please wait a moment, I must tell my father."

Cheng-Si went into the house. She did not know how to tell her father about her fatal decision.

"To tell him the truth," she said to herself "is to condemn him to a death from grief. I can remember his anxiety that day when I was a little late in coming home. Now suppose I should never come back—but it must be done."

The young girl threw her arms about her father's neck and cried in a joyful voice:

"Father, I have found a way to get you the three hundred bags of rice that you owe the disciple. Send for him at once."

When the disciple had come, Cheng-Si took him to the merchant's place of business and turned over to him the three hundred bags of rice. She then demanded, in exchange, the paper bearing her

father's signature, thanked him for having saved Sun-Yen's life, and asked him to continue his prayers for the blind man. The disciple promised to do so and left the young girl.

Very happy because of her sacrifice, she hastened to her father and handed him the paper which he had signed.

"Where did you get this?" demanded the surprised Sun.

"From the disciple, to whom I gave the three hundred sacks of rice."

"But, how in the world did you get all that rice, my daughter?"

"In a very simple way. I sold myself the other day."

"What are you saying! Ah, unhappy girl, do you want to kill me?"

"Now do not worry about this, father. Let me finish what I have to tell you. It is true that I have sold myself but I am not going very far away and perhaps I shall see you every day. There isn't anything to be troubled about. I am sacrificing my liberty with the best of good will so as to insure your happiness. When we have saved up enough money I will pay back the price of the rice and then, once I am free, nothing can prevent me from remaining with you forever."

The young girl, having calmed somewhat her

father's fears, went to the merchant's to learn the date of her departure.

The merchant told her that they were not going to set sail for three months. Meanwhile, Cheng-Si was thinking constantly of the solitude in which her father would be after she had gone. What would become of the poor blind man, alone and without resources? This thought haunted her day and night. She sought to accumulate a little money and some food which would be enough for him to live on decently for some little time.

The three months soon came to an end and the merchant returned to remind her of her promise. She asked permission to speak to her father for the last time. She had not yet revealed to him the entire truth. The merchant, of course, consented and even went into the house with her.

"Father," she said, "I must leave you."

"My daughter, leave me? And where are you going?"

"Father, I deceived you the other day. It was not my liberty but my life which I gave in exchange for the three hundred sacks of rice which you promised the disciple. Yes, I was purchased, body and soul. I have to plunge to the bottom of the Yellow Sea to pray for a favorable passage for our sailors."

Cheng-Si had tenderly placed her arms about her father to support him while she was making this

fatal confession. Nevertheless, the blind man could not bear the shock and he fell into a swoon.

When he regained consciousness, he said in a voice that was scarcely audible, "Unhappy child, is it indeed true that you are going to abandon me in this way? After having seen your mother die, must I see you, too, leave the world before me? Oh, tell me that it is a dream! Consider your poor blind father and think what will become of him when he no longer has you with him. No, it cannot be, you are not going to die."

Sun-Yen burst into tears. His daughter tried vainly to keep from weeping herself for she felt that her heart was broken. The merchant, a witness of the scene, was very much moved, too. He beckoned the girl to him and said:

"I will give you another hundred bags of rice and we will not set sail for three days. Would you like that?"

Cheng-Si thanked the man profusely and went with him to the door. The following day, after she had obtained the hundred sacks of rice, she sought an audience with the leading magistrate of the town. He consented to take charge of the maintenance of the old gentleman in consideration of the one hundred bags of rice which he took as a sort of deposit.

The young girl did not leave her father until the merchant came for her. She endeavored to console

the old gentleman as best she could. When the time for the separation came, it was heart-rending. Sun-Yen threw his arms about his daughter's neck while his frame was shaken with sobs.

"I want to die with you. I will not let you go alone."

The cries of the poor blind man attracted a number of the neighbors, who were also moved to tears at the pathetic sight. Finally the trader grasped the girl by the arm and said in a trembling, gentle voice, "We must go now."

Paralyzed by grief, Sun fainted and his arms slipped from about his daughter's form.

"Good-bye, father," she called back as she walked away. "Don't worry, we shall meet again in a better place where we shall be happy forever."

Cheng-Si renewed her requests to the magistrate, who, shortly after, visited the unfortunate father and tried to console him a bit, without succeeding to the slightest extent.

For Cheng-Si had gone.

Here cometh to a close the second step of our legend.

III

III

SAN-HOUNI, the scholar and intimate friend of Sun-Yen, was likewise condemned to exile on account of his friendship for the disgraced. He was obliged to leave the Korean Capital, a circumstance which he regretted exceedingly just at this time because his wife, Yeng-Si, who was soon to become a mother, would not have the comforts and advantages of the city. But of what avail are innocence and regret when a Prime Minister has rendered one undesirable in the eyes of the Monarch? It was decreed that San-Houni be banished and that he be forced to live on the island of Ko-Kum-To, a desolate, sparsely populated rock in the Yellow Sea.

It was a long journey. The trip would consume several days. San-Houni's few servants took care of the details of the packing but he himself went in quest of a boatman who would agree to take him and his wife across the waters to the island. His choice was not a happy one but he was unaware of it.

The most violent contrast existed between the characters of Su-Rung and Su-Yeng, the two broth-

ers, whom San-Houni engaged for the trip. From this difference in temperament great misfortunes were to come.

As long as they were in sight of the coast, things went well, but when the party was on the open sea, Su-Rung the wicked, revealed his designs.

"I am somewhat taken with the wife of our passenger," he whispered to his brother, "I want her and I'm going to get her. Her husband grates on my nerves. I must get him out of the way."

"You are mad," replied Su-Yeng. "Do you think for a minute that I will ever allow you to do anything like that?"

"Bah! You are jealous of me," cried Su-Rung, in a fury.

"Not at all, but your intentions disgust me."

Su-Rung said nothing further but it could readily be seen that he had not given up his project.

The terrible thing about all this was that San-Houni and his wife had overheard the brothers. Their anxiety grew and soon merged into real fear. They discussed in low tones the peril which threatened them and how it would be possible to escape.

There was not much time left to them for reflection. Su-Rung called the oarsmen and whispered aside to them, "Men, I want you to grab that fellow and his servant. Take and keep what money they

have on them and kill them. The woman alone must live. Make a good job of it."

Su-Yeng here interposed, "I think you should be content with taking their money, but at least spare their lives."

"Mind your own business," shouted Su-Rung in a rage. "I am master here. Get out of my way and let me alone!"

Su-Yeng was forced to obey his brother's injunction. As soon as he had turned his back, San-Houni and his servant were put to death. The murder was committed under the very eyes of the scholar's wife. She was dazed with anger and sorrow. Having no desire to survive her husband, she plunged into the sea, crying, "In spite of you, I shall die with my husband."

Su-Rung, however, ordered his sailors to turn about and rescue the unhappy woman. A few minutes more and Yeng-Si was pulled into the boat alive and safe.

Then the assassin, judging it indiscreet to continue in the direction of Ko-Kum-To, changed the course of his vessel to a spot he was well acquainted with. The boat made a landing shortly after. Su-Rung jumped ashore and approached an old woman on the beach, to whom he said:

"Go aboard my boat, you will find a woman there.

I want you to take her home with you. Be very gentle and kind to her, encourage her, and console her, for she has been deeply afflicted."

The old lady at once set about doing what Su-Rung had requested.

Meanwhile, Su-Rung had anchored his boat and as a sign of self-satisfaction he invited his men to a feast, where they made merry and drank freely. Shortly all the guests were drunk except Su-Yeng. He was broken up at the turn of events and his inability to avert Su-Rung's crime. Therefore, he resolved to profit by the present situation by assisting, if it were possible, his brother's unfortunate captive. He left the revelers without being noticed and, setting out at a rapid gait, soon reached the home of the old lady. He paused before entering at the sound of voices and in the midst of the lamentations of Yeng-Si, he could make out these words:

"Where do you come from?"

"The Capital."

"Is that so? I lived at Yeng-Yang."

"Then how is it that you are in these parts?"

The old lady, for it was she who was talking with Yeng-Si, uttered a deep sigh.

"Alas, I have lived here for ten years, much against my will. Like you, I am a victim of Su-Rung, who murdered my husband. I am awaiting the hour of vengeance, but it is slow in coming. Will this monster remain unpunished forever?"

Touched by her story, Yeng-Si forgot for the time her own misfortunes to sympathize with her companion. It was just at this moment that Su-Yeng entered the room where the two women were and said in a troubled voice:

"Do not take things too hard. Perhaps you will be rescued very soon. There is some one who is looking out for you. I have a profound horror of my brother's evil deeds. Listen, if you wish to escape you will never have an easier time than now."

"How so, your brother. . . ."

"Don't be afraid. For the time being, he is not capable of following you for he is asleep and dead drunk, but there is not a minute to be lost. You know the country for you have lived here a long while. You must show the way to this lady who is a stranger. Here, take this money, it will not do to wait any longer."

The two women, weeping and sobbing, threw themselves at the feet of their rescuer in gratitude.

Su-Yeng helped them to their feet and urged them again to leave. It would be advisable, he insisted, to make haste for the rage of Su-Rung, if he captured them, would be terrible.

Yielding to the entreaties of Su-Yeng, the two women set out. Their friend accompanied them for a short distance. When they were alone, they walked as rapidly as their strength would permit. At the end of two hours Yeng-Si, thoroughly fatigued, re-

quested that they rest for a few moments. Her companion consented quite willingly. So the two fugitives sat down to rest their weary bodies. Suddenly the elder of the two said to the other:

"I'm going to ask you something."

"What can I do for you?"

"Well, I would consider it a great favor if you would let me have your sandals in exchange for mine."

This request puzzled Yeng-Si a great deal as she did not understand the purpose of the elder woman's intentions. However, the old lady gave her little time for reflection.

"You are," she said, "like me, very tired, but you are still young, consequently you are capable of enduring greater hardships than I. I am very old. You go on. If Su-Rung catches up—and he will not wait long—I will tell him that I do not know in what direction you went. Now, hurry on, but leave your sandals here with me if you wish to be real kind."

Yeng-Si arose at once. She thanked her friend for her excellent advice and handed her sandals to her without understanding in the least what motive she had in this request. As she was leaving, the old lady continued:

"Just a moment. I am going to show you the road which you should take to escape from Su-Rung. Keep straight ahead until you come to a grove of

bamboo where you might rest a few moments if you like, then keep on walking in the same direction until you come upon the temple of Buddha. When you arrive at this spot, you will be out of danger but be careful to follow my directions explicitly."

"I will do so, thank you."

"Good, now, good-bye."

When Yeng-Si had gone a short way, the old woman arose, and taking the sandals, she turned toward a lake which was a short distance away. Placing them at the water's edge, she uttered a brief prayer and jumped into the water.

Yeng-Si, however, heard her cries. She immediately retraced her steps, hastening to the lake where she noticed the sandals beside the water and the body of the old lady floating on the surface. This sight almost overbore her.

"Why did this poor woman drown herself?" she muttered. "Can it be—yes, I imagine—her persistency in asking for my sandals—oh, blessed one! She had the idea of dying before saying good-bye. She did not wish her death to be fruitless, so she placed my sandals on the shore, that it would appear as if I had committed suicide. Poor woman, how devoted she was! May she have her reward in the Hereafter."

If she had listened to the promptings of her heart, Yeng-Si would have remained there mourning for

her unfortunate companion. Remembering the entreaties of the latter, however, she hurried her steps and shortly came to the forest of bamboo. Suddenly she experienced the most agonizing pains. She trembled, shivered, broke out into a cold perspiration and suffered terribly. She understood that she was about to become a mother. What a terrible situation she was in! Here alone, away from everybody, what was to become of her?

* * * *

Yes, it was a little boy. She seized the poor, little being and covered it with tears and kisses.

"Poor child," she said, "what can I do with you? You have no father and your mother does not know what is going to become of you."

Fortunately for Yeng-Si, some one had heard her shrieks and cries. It was a nun from the temple that the old lady had told her about. This nun ran to the spot whence the cries came and was somewhat surprised to find there the mother and child.

After rendering what assistance she could, she asked her how it came about that she gave birth to the child in that place.

Yeng-Si told briefly her sad story. The nun was deeply touched at the tale—so fraught with sorrow.

"What do you count upon doing?" she asked her.

"Alas, I do not know. Here I am alone and with-

out resources. How can I bring up my little one? I shall have to abandon him, but I shall not live long anyway, I am sure of that, so perhaps I shall make way with myself."

"That would not be doing exactly right. Suppose you try to follow my advice. Give your child to some charitable person and come live with me."

"I could not ask for anything better, but why can't I take my little one along with me?"

"Because it is against the rules of our order to receive children. I know it is hard for you to give up your little one, but since you scarcely have any choice in the matter, you must resign yourself. If you were to continue on your way with your little son you would unquestionably fall into the hands of the brigands. Besides, it is possible that you may be able to reclaim your child some day in the future. When he becomes a man he will aid you in getting retribution for his father's death."

Yeng-Si followed the advice of the nun. She wrapped the little fellow as well as she could, tearing bandages from her own clothes. Since she wished to have some sign which would enable her to recognize her son, she took his arm and with a needle traced on the pink flesh the characters forming the name of San-Syeng. Then she went over these letters with India ink which the nun gave her. Finally, slipping off the ring which she wore, she placed it in

the wrappings of the child. This finished, she started out accompanied by the nun. They were going to the neighboring village to place the child at a street corner and then return to the temple.

Very soon, Yeng-Si could sight the roofs of the little village where she was to say "good-bye" to her son. Alas, the child, whom she and her husband had been looking forward to with such great joy, would be abandoned just as if she were an unnatural mother. Her cup was filled to the brim with sorrow, for her husband had been murdered before her eyes and now her son was to be left on a street corner. More dead than alive, she gently placed the child on the ground after giving him a last fond kiss. With a supreme effort she regained her courage and walked slowly away, shedding tears of sorrow, while the hunger-cries of the baby grew louder and louder.

She tottered along very, very feebly, she was so torn with emotion and anguish. The nun, familiar with sad scenes, was nevertheless deeply moved.

"Pray, pray to Heaven," she said to Yeng-Si, "some day you will find your son. He will come to you when he grows up. Something within me gives me confidence in what I am telling you, but prepare yourself for a long separation—take courage."

Here endeth our third chapter.

IV

IV

WHEN the vapors of intoxication had cleared from Su-Rung's brain, his first thought was of his captive. He ran to the old woman's hut where the widow of San-Houni was confined. Great was his astonishment on finding the house empty. In vain did he burst into anger, and shout. No one answered. Breathless from rage, he went to his brother.

"Have you seen these two women?"

"No. I have not seen them since I was here last."

"They have disappeared, but I know how to find them."

Su-Rung set out in pursuit accompanied by his brother. The latter feared that Su-Rung in his fury would do harm if he succeeded in coming upon the fugitives and Su-Yeng wished to be present to protect them should the worst come to the worst.

Traveling speedily, the two brothers very soon reached the shores of the lake, of which we have spoken before. Here they saw Yeng-Si's sandals by the water's edge and a body floating in the middle of the lake.

Even Su-Rung was moved by the sight and cried: "The poor woman is drowned."

"Brother," replied Su-Yeng, "you would not listen to me and you have been punished. You wished to make this woman your slave and she has escaped from your clutches in spite of your efforts. What a great misfortune for us."

"You mean to say that it is my fault," took up Su-Rung, angrily, "You are to blame yourself. Why did you let my prisoner escape?"

The dispute between the two brothers lasted in this manner until Su-Rung's rage had cooled. Instead of retracing their steps at once they continued on their way to the neighboring village and were the first ones to find the baby which Yeng-Si had left there a half hour or so before. Quite pleased at his unusual discovery Su-Rung took the little being and carried it home with him where he confided it to a nurse, instructing her to take the greatest care of the little boy.

Several times Su-Rung questioned his brother concerning the escape of the two women. Not being successful, however, in learning anything about the matter he dismissed the entire subject from his mind.

The murderer of San-Houni gave all his time to the education of the child he had adopted. He treated him as if he were his own son. It must be said that the little fellow gave him abundant cause for

satisfaction. He was good to look upon, extremely intelligent and grew up rapidly. One day he asked Su-Rung:

"Father, where is my mother?"

"Your mother," replied Su-Rung, very much embarrassed by the question, "your mother died a short time after you were born."

Su-Rung was in the habit of accompanying his adopted son to school. The young scholar was not long in distinguishing himself among his comrades who could not witness his success without a show of jealousy and hate. To obtain revenge they could find nothing better to do than to taunt him about having no parents.

"No parents," shouted the indignant boy. "Why, I have a father and it is not my fault if I lost my mother before I was able to know her. I do not see why I deserve your reproaches."

"That shows that you really do not know anything about yourself. Su-Rung is not your father. He is only a thief and a robber. He found you on a street corner and brought you up."

This revelation troubled the child very much and he made it known to Su-Rung.

"Don't be troubled about that, my child," replied the latter. "These boys are jealous of you and they invent these stories to anger you. They are not worth bothering about at all."

Yeng-Si's son was somewhat reassured by this. But other circumstances aroused his suspicions. He accidentally discovered the name of San-Syeng tattooed on his arm. Additional evidence was furnished him when he found a ring one day while rummaging among some old books and papers. He hid this precious object in his pocket, saying to himself:

"I believe what the fellows told me was true after all."

From this day on, San-Syeng was constantly preoccupied with thoughts as to who his parents might be. In order to more easily solve this problem he determined to travel through the country, thinking that some day he would be able to discover those to whom he owed his birth.

When he had reached his seventeenth year, San-Syeng asked Su-Rung for permission to make a trip through Korea in order to finish his education. Su-Rung made no opposition, although he preferred that his adopted son take a traveling companion. Nevertheless, he did not insist but gave his consent for San-Syeng to travel alone on a journey that would consume perhaps two years.

San-Syeng had been gone several weeks when he came to a beautiful little village where he counted upon remaining but a short while. Until now, his voyage had been uneventful. But the time for adventure was at hand. The first incident was some-

what distasteful. San-Syeng had stopped for a moment in the street where some children were playing. He was watching their antics with pleasure when he received a shock. He had just heard one of the gamins ask one of his comrades.

"Do you know that robber, Su-Rung?"

"By name, yes, but I have never seen him. Why do you ask me that? He's a wicked man."

"Because they tell a remarkable story about that fellow. One of my friends was at school with the son, or rather the adopted son, of this thief. It seems, in fact, that Su-Rung found the child abandoned by the roadside and took him home and raised him. Thanks to his robberies, the man is very rich. He has just sent his son on a long trip. That's what my friend told me."

San-Syeng had not missed a word of this conversation. His curiosity was aroused to the highest pitch, so he approached the youngster who had spoken, and asked,

"Pardon me, friend, would you tell me your name? Do you know Su-Rung?"

"Sir, I know this man only through having heard tales of him."

This reply hardly satisfied San-Syeng, but, believing that the child had been frightened, he did not pursue his questioning further but walked on.

Shortly afterward, San-Syeng came to the village of Yen-Yu, where he decided to tarry for a few days to recover from the fatigue of his travels.

Before seeking a lodging he took a stroll through the village to see the sights. His attention was drawn to a great mansion surrounded by a vast garden, so he turned in this direction to view it more closely. He came to a pause when he saw in the garden a young girl of marvelous beauty. It was impossible to approach her as the garden was surrounded by a continuous wall. He walked on for a few paces and then, yielding to some indescribable impulse, he retraced his steps. The young girl was still there. She turned a candid look toward the walker, giving the young man a subtle thrill of pleasure. It is true that his eyes had never met such a sight—a bright oval face as fresh as a half ripened peach, eyes that rivaled the stars in their brilliancy. Her hair, which fell down over her shoulders, was as fine and golden as the clouds which disappear behind the mountain peaks in the rays of the setting sun. Add to these attractions a very small hand and a gait as graceful as the flight of a bird. The admiration of San-Syeng could not be restrained. He could not take his eyes away from the vision of loveliness. The girl, walking up and down the garden, now and then cast furtive glances at the youth who was watching her.

San-Syeng was in a veritable daze. For a considerable time he remained in the one spot, even after the beautiful unknown had disappeared. Finally, he decided to find a lodging, hoping also to obtain some information concerning the beautiful girl whose charms still held him. His first action, therefore, on arriving at the village inn, was to inquire:

"To whom does yonder mansion belong that is surrounded by such a beautiful garden? Its owner is doubtless a personage of some importance?"

"Yes, it is the estate of a very rich family, the head of which, Yeng-Yen-Sa, is dead. The only people who live in that large house are his wife and his daughter."

"Is the daughter married?"

"No, sir, she is scarcely seventeen years old."

San-Syeng's curiosity was satisfied for the moment. When alone, he gave himself up to reflection. First, he determined to lengthen his stay in Yen-Yu. He was burning with desire to see the unknown beauty again. Each day for hours at a time he would walk in the neighborhood of the garden where he had first seen the young girl who was constantly occupying his thoughts. Alas! his beautiful stroller of the garden remained indoors. He was sad unto death. One evening, when his sorrow, revived again by the memory of his parents, was more acute than ever, he sought distraction in music. He took his flute, and,

stationing himself near the garden, improvised the following verses:

"Homeless am I—I know neither Heaven nor Earth.

I am walking in despair, seeking in vain for those who gave me birth.

In a garden there is a flower of marvelous beauty.

I would like to pluck this blossom, but the branches which bear it are so high I cannot reach them.

My most ardent desire would be to die and become a butterfly so that I could hover about this adorable flower."

San-Syeng then cleverly composed a sweet melody, to serve as an accompaniment to this poetry, which he played upon his instrument with much feeling.

The young girl had heard everything. Deeply perplexed, she asked herself what could be the meaning of the charming words which had come to her ears.

"If this young man," she mused, "does not know Heaven nor Earth, it means he has lost his parents. If he wants to be transformed into a butterfly to flit around a flower, it means he loves a young girl."

Very much puzzled, she sent her servant to inquire who could be the author of the verses she had just heard. She wondered if it were not the young man

whom she had seen a few days before walking near the garden. Still impressed by what she had heard, she took her own instrument and in turn improvised the following verses:

"The spider spins her web from flower-stem to flower-stem, but the butterfly does not come.

I have dug a lake in my garden to attract the swans, but in vain are my labors.

I have planted a tree to serve as a refuge for the swallow, but the bird remains mute to my call while displeasing birds come a-flocking.

To-day, however, I heard the song of the blue bird. He has at last arrived and very soon he will be close and dear to me.

The age of sixteen is the fair Springtime of life. If I want to be happy, I should not wait much longer."

These words filled San-Syeng with a deep joy for they seemed to be a reply to his own verses and he felt overwhelmed with emotion. He went home, but it was in vain that he tried to sleep.

On her part, the young girl slept with difficulty, as her mind was agitated by what had just taken place. Now it came to pass that her father appeared before her in a dream and said, "My daughter, there is stopping at the inn nearest our home a traveler whose merits I bring to your attention. It is the son of San-

Houni, the scholar, one of my best friends. I would like you to marry this young man."

She objected that she was not even acquainted with the youth.

"Yes, my daughter," replied her father, "you have already seen him. He comes of a very noble family. Good-bye, my daughter."

The young girl wished to detain her father, but to her sorrow her efforts were of no avail; the vision faded and she awoke in tears.

"How can I obey my father's command," she complained. "I must devise some way to meet this young man. I will go into the garden again this evening and perhaps I shall see the man whom my father has ordered me to marry."

She was not disappointed in her hopes. When night had lowered its curtain of darkness she went down into the garden and caught sight of San-Syeng. But instead of going to meet him, she turned and rushed into the house like a frightened kitten.

San-Syeng was stupefied and broken up by her sudden disappearance. Despairing of being able to talk with the girl he loved, he resolved to write to her. So the next evening he returned to the garden with a letter. Again the young girl appeared for a few minutes. He walked in front of her, tossed the letter over the garden wall, and left.

The young girl ran to pick it up, hurried with it to her room, where she read the neat characters:

"Mademoiselle, excuse my boldness. I have but a few words to say. Do you know what the butterfly is? It is an insect that is fond of flowers. Nights when attracted by the light of the lamps which it takes for flowers, it throws itself into the flame and perishes."

"This is a comparison that applies to me closely," thought the young girl. "I shall have my answer for this young man to-morrow."

The next evening when San-Syeng returned to his post by the garden wall he saw the girl raise both hands and point to the moon.

After this graceful and significant gesture she ran into the house.

San-Syeng went home, much perplexed. "She made a sign to me," he pondered, "but what meaning does this sign have?" He reflected for a long time, conjuring up hypothesis after hypothesis. Finally, he struck his forehead with an exclamation of joy, crying: "I believe I have it. The girl raised both of her hands, she must have meant the number ten. Then she pointed to the moon, that surely means at night. She wanted to tell me that she would meet me to-morrow evening at ten o'clock. That's it beyond a doubt."

He awaited with impatience the following evening. Long before the appointed time he was in the garden, worried and anxious as to whether he had not given an erroneous interpretation to the young girl's gesture. At ten o'clock she came daintily

along the garden path, advancing gaily and smiling. She paused to pick a flower which she placed between her lips. One might have thought she was playing the flute, so sweet were the soft, low sounds of song which came from her throat. Picking up a dead branch she amused herself by whipping the leaves which strewed the ground. San-Syeng contemplated the vision with an admiration that held him spell-bound. One might have said it was like a cat entrapping a mouse. When she arrived within a few paces of him she stopped as if frightened and seemed about to draw back. Then San-Syeng advanced toward her. "How beautiful she is," was his thought. So great was his admiration that he could not find a single word to say. The young girl too remained silent. San-Syeng thought, "My first words must express all the love I feel, but my tongue is weak and incapable of it. What is her feeling toward me? Does she have a tender and loving heart, or has wickedness already penetrated this beautiful young soul? Let's try a little trick."

The girl saw San-Syeng drop suddenly to the ground. Without an instant's hesitation she ran to his help. Supporting his head in her hands, and after dusting off his clothes which had been soiled by the fall, she assisted him to arise and led him to a nearby bench.

Then San-Syeng said wearily, as if he were just

regaining consciousness, "Pardon me, mademoiselle, I am confused with all the trouble I am giving you."

"Not at all, sir," replied the young girl. "I am happy to have been able to render you assistance. I only ask for permission to put one question to you. Where do you live?"

"I live at Nam-Hai and my name is San-Syeng."

"Has it been very long since you left that town?"

"Almost six months."

"And have you seen many interesting things on your journey?"

"Yes, many."

"Your parents are still alive, I suppose?"

"No, mademoiselle, I lost my parents a long time ago. And are your father and mother still alive?"

"My father is dead and I live with my mother. Wasn't it you who came here playing the flute the other evening?"

"It was I, mademoiselle. And tell me, didn't you reply on your instrument?"

"Yes."

"I am very grateful. You have condescended to listen, you have not repulsed me, and this evening you have given me the greatest of pleasures by talking with me."

"But, sir, were you ill just a while ago?"

"Mademoiselle, I lost my head through love of you. May I in turn ask why you did not reply to

my note? You made a sign to me and I imagined that you were inviting me to return this evening at ten o'clock. Was I right?"

"Yes, sir, you divined my thoughts exactly. Do you know you have given evidence of great intelligence. You have captured my heart without the slightest effort, like the fisherman who catches a fish that is surprised to see itself so easily taken. Now you may call me Yeng-So-Yei, for that is my name."

At these words, San-Syeng seized the hand of the girl and covered it with kisses.

"I have not sought to ensnare you. It was merely my love, my boundless love, which impelled me to act thus. But it is late. Your mother will notice your absence and will become worried. Let us meet again to-morrow at the same hour."

The young girl nodded her head as a sign of acquiescence and withdrew into the house. In the solitude of her room she thought for a long time of the events of the evening. "I love this young man," she said, "he is so intelligent and has such a splendid appearance. In giving him my heart I have done nothing but obey my father's counsel. Therefore, I should have no remorse about my conduct. I shall marry the man I love and accomplish my father's wish."

Similar reflections agitated San-Syeng's mind. "How beautiful and good she is!" he would repeat

to himself. "I love her to distraction. I can never wait until to-morrow evening to see her. How long this night and day are going to be!"

The hours rolled around, however, and the time came for San-Syeng to visit the girl once more. She came running to meet him, her face radiant with joy and happiness. After they had exchanged a few words of greeting she said to San-Syeng:

"Let's go into the house. We can talk better. You can come to my room where no one will disturb us."

"But don't you fear that your mother will notice something?"

"My mother is very old and feeble, we have nothing to fear from her."

San-Syeng followed the young girl. He was much impressed to see with what skill she had arranged her room. He complimented her on her taste and good judgment and added: "How happy you must be!"

"And aren't you happy, too?"

"Alas, I have lost my parents, and I am alone in the world. Life is no longer attractive to me. You have given me the first pleasure in my life and I am obliged to resume my travels within a few days."

"But why must you leave? Haven't you told me that you loved me?"

"Yes, I love you with all my heart and soul. But

it is only another misfortune for me because I can never marry you."

"Why do you say that?"

"I can never marry you because you are rich, while I am penniless."

"Fie, foolish," teased the girl, drawing him to her. "Don't you know that I love you and that nothing can prevent me from being your wife and companion? We shall marry. Do not leave me. Remain with me to-night, my mother will not know."

Their lips were united in one long kiss. At daybreak San-Syeng departed. He regarded himself as the happiest of mortals and promised to spare no effort to make life happy for the girl who had chosen him for her husband.

Every evening the young man went to visit his wife. Now it came to pass one night, that her mother, unable to sleep, arose from her couch and went walking through the house. Passing before the door of her daughter's room she heard, above the sound of mingled kisses, her daughter speaking with some one. Immediately she fell into a great fury. She tried to open the door, but was unsuccessful. Calling a servant, she said:

"Take a sabre, and place yourself before this door. You are to kill the first person who leaves that room."

San-Syeng and his wife had not heard these words

for they were asleep. The girl had another dream in which she saw her father. "My daughter," he said, "you are in great danger. Your husband's life is threatened. Arise and see what is on the other side of your door. Find a way for your husband to escape. Give him my favorite horse so that he can take flight. You may also give him my sword. You will be separated for some time, but you will be united in the days to come."

Startled by the warning, the young girl softly opened the door where she saw the servant with drawn sabre.

"What are you doing here—and with a weapon, too?" she demanded.

"I am standing guard at your mother's orders and I am to kill the first person who leaves your room."

"Why, my mother is mad. There is no one with me. I was just about to call you anyway and send you on an errand. I would like to write and I haven't a single bit of paper. Will you get me some?"

"I cannot leave this post, mademoiselle."

"Why not? If you are afraid that my mother's prisoner will escape, let me have your sabre. I will take your place while you get me what I want."

The servant was persuaded with little difficulty. Scarcely had he left than the young lady ran to her

husband and cried: "Up at once or you are lost. My mother has learned that there is some one with me and has stationed a servant at the door with orders to kill any one who leaves my room. Wait for me in the garden."

San-Syeng arose hurriedly and descended cautiously and quietly into the garden. The servant returned and received the assurance that no one had left the room which he had been guarding.

"I think I shall take a walk in the garden," the girl suggested. "This room is too warm for me."

She went direct to the stables where she led out the horse which her father had mentioned and brought him to San-Syeng. The two lovers embraced and wept bitterly at being forced to part in so abrupt a fashion. The girl had gathered together her jewels and what silver she had at hand and turned them over to San-Syeng together with her father's favorite sword. San-Syeng, despite his protest, was forced to accept them. He slipped from his finger the ring which he had found among the books long years before and the significance of which he did not even guess.

"Take this keepsake," he said to his wife. "It is a token of my undying love. As long as I live I shall think only of you and I hope soon to come back for you. I will go to the Capital and shall

soon have matters fixed so that I may rejoin you. Good-bye."

He went away, his head bowed in sadness, while the young girl, tears rolling down her cheeks, followed him with her eyes until she saw him disappear in the black depths of the wood.

"I wish I could burn that forest and then my San-Syeng would have to take the mountain road, and I wish the plagued mountains were at the bottom of the sea," cried the unhappy girl—"for I would be able to see my husband again."

She remained for a long time in the one spot motionless as a statue. At last, she decided to go to her room, following in spirit San-Syeng who was galloping briskly toward the Capital. He arrived there when there was great excitement among the people of the city because of the death of the King and the exile of the young Prince to the Isle of Cho-To, events upon which we shall comment in the coming stage of our story.

Here the fourth stage of our legend cometh to a close.

V

V

IT was Ja-Jo-Mi, the Prime Minister, who had been the chief cause of all the evils which had come to Sun-Yen and San-Houni. This dignitary, no longer having any one to fear, enjoyed absolute power. The King had entire confidence in him and placed in his hands the administration of the government. Ja-Jo-Mi had taken advantage of this to give all the important and lucrative offices to his followers. For example, he discharged in disgrace a general whom he disliked and replaced him with one of his most zealous but incompetent partisans. Even with all this power the ambitious Minister was not satisfied. Why should he not push things to the limit and place himself upon the throne? For the present, it was only a dream which Ja-Jo-Mi hoped to realize some day. But he was only awaiting a favorable occasion and this was not long in presenting itself.

The King fell suddenly ill. His condition became so grave that the leading physicians of the Kingdom were obliged to confess their inability to cure him. He was well aware of his serious condition and cherished no illusions about it. He sensed the flutter of the wings of Death—wings drenched with the

tears of weeping humanity. He sent for the Prime Minister, to whom he spoke after the following fashion:

"I am going to die. My great regret is in leaving a son too young efficiently to govern the country. Factions will take advantage of the situation to disturb the peace of the Kingdom. Yet I want my son to succeed me on the throne. Consequently I am requiring of you a further proof of your devotion. Promise me to give this child the guidance of your counsel and wisdom. Teach him to govern kindly and finish his education."

Ja-Jo-Mi, the unscrupulous, swore solemnly that he would faithfully observe the last commands of his master. The monarch desired to see his son, so the latter was brought to his bedside. The King tenderly took the youth in his arms. He seemed to wish, through him, to cling longer to the life he was leaving. But the fatal hour had come; he drew his last breath in a sob.

His son, overcome by grief, uttered wild cries—"Oh, my father, my only refuge, why do you forsake me? Why must you leave me?" Finally he fell into a swoon.

The Prime Minister, who was present at this scene, tried to calm the young Prince with profuse and hypocritical condolences. His words were far from being in accord with his inner thoughts. The

King's death filled his soul with joy, for it rendered easier the project he had been dreaming about for so long.

When the funeral ceremonies were over, the Governors of the provinces held a conference upon the question of choosing a new King. The Governor's choice naturally fell upon the shoulders of the deceased King's son. This decision exasperated Ja-Jo-Mi; he protested furiously against it, saying that the Prince was too young to attend to affairs of state and he painted a very black picture of the conditions of the country if the government were placed in his hands.

"Moreover, the dying King appointed me to rule until his son should be capable of taking the throne."

The Prime Minister expected favorable results from this announcement. The Governors, however, contented themselves with exchanging significant glances, but they did not utter a word in support of the Minister's proposal.

This cold reception did not leave Ja-Jo-Mi any delusions as to the attitude of the Governors on the subject. Renouncing the powers of peaceful persuasion, he resolved to employ force. He summoned the General whose support he was assured of and said to him:

"You will throw into prison any official who is hostile to me."

The General bowed in a sign of obedience and withdrew. Although very much terrified, the Governors did not submit peacefully to this new means of intimidation and Ja-Jo-Mi condemned several of the most influential of them to banishment. No one was in a position now to oppose the execution of his designs.

Having thus overridden the opposition of the Governors, Ja-Jo-Mi went to the young King.

"All powerful Prince," he said, kneeling respectfully, "forgive me if I disturb you in your grief. The welfare of the people compels me to discuss with you certain things which I fain would defer to a more opportune moment."

"Speak," bade the young King.

"You are doubtless well aware that, according to the precepts laid down by the venerable philosopher, Kong-Ji, no one can reign in Korea before attaining a certain age. In spite of your exceptional intelligence and remarkable ability I fear that you are too young to rule alone. Your father, my regretted master, on his death bed, requested me to look after the interests of the State while you were preparing to assume them yourself. It is with great regret that I remind you of this last wish of the deceased King, for I am aggravating your sorrow, I know. But I hope that you will conform to your father's desires and the philosopher's wisdom."

Ja-Jo-Mi had hoped to convince the Prince with these arguments. Great then was his astonishment when the youth replied:

"You are interpreting the last words of my dear father for your own ends and in your own interests. He asked you to guide and advise me but did not intimate that you should take my place at the head of the Koreans. Know then, that it is my intention to govern in person. I have nothing more to add."

It was a summary dismissal. Ja-Jo-Mi, feigning to acquiesce in the desires of his sovereign, withdrew backwards, saying:

"Sire, it shall be as you wish."

Thus the ambitious Minister had encountered, in the energy of the young King, a formidable obstruction in the path of his plans. But it did not discourage him. Since the Prince would not relinquish his post with a good grace, he would commandeer it by force. It would be very easy. All the office-holders at the Capital were devoted to Ja-Jo-Mi, for it was through him that they held their places. The people were not to be feared for they lacked leaders. One bright and beautiful day, the King found himself under arrest and transported to Cho-To. The Prime Minister had ordered the prisoner to be guarded by the troops day and night and the deposed Prince was kept under the strictest surveillance all the time.

Ja-Jo-Mi, the unscrupulous, for the time being, was master of the land. He hoped soon to be completely rid of the legitimate King and to finish his days tranquilly on the throne that he had so treacherously usurped.

These events had caused a growing unrest throughout the length and breadth of Korea. The people were talking and grumbling, but they did not dare openly to manifest their disapproval. The conduct of the Prime Minister became an every-day topic of conversation. On the street corners, bolder groups were wont to gather and discuss matters vigorously.

One day, when San-Syeng was out walking he noticed one of these crowds; he hurried back to his lodgings and inquired of Hong-Jun, his landlord, who had formerly held an important commission in the army,

"What has happened? I see that the inhabitants of this city, ordinarily so calm and peaceful, laboring under unusual excitement. What's the cause of it?"

"What, don't you know?" replied Hong-Jun. "It is rumored that the Prime Minister, who always did have a detestable reputation, has just crowned his infamy by exiling the King's son. Instead of occupying the throne, our young ruler is in prison."

San-Syeng was thunder-struck. Heeding only the

impulses of his noble heart, he resolved to discover some means to help the unfortunate young ruler.

He had a dream that night which served to strengthen his resolution. He saw in his dream a person whom he had already met in the course of his travels and who asked his name.

"My name is San-Syeng."

"Good, I belong to the same family as you. My name is San-Houni. I was banished from the Capital by Ja-Jo-Mi. While on my way to the island of Ko-Kum-To I was murdered by the robber Su-Rung. Listen, for I have something to ask of you. At this very moment, the deceased King's son is in exile at Cho-To. He is also a victim of Ja-Jo-Mi. Go, help him."

San-Syeng told his questioner that he had fully made up his mind to assist the young ruler. "Can you not," he added subsequently, "give me some information about my family?"

"It is impossible for me to grant your wish for the present," was the rejoinder, and the vision disappeared. When San-Syeng awoke he recalled his dream in all its minute details.

What could this mystery be which surrounded Su-Rung? San-Syeng had heard the man whom he regarded as a father spoken of as a thief and now he was pictured as an assassin. All this gave the young man food for serious reflection. However, the most

urgent matter now was to go to the succour of the young exile and San-Syeng took immediate steps to leave for Cho-To.

It was an island that was easily accessible but by the orders of Ja-Jo-Mi no one was permitted to land there without a permit from the Prime Minister. In vain did San-Syeng try to evade the vigilance of the soldiers who were guarding the shore. He was forced to confess that it was impossible to land on the island. Not disheartened by his failure, however, he resolved to await more auspicious circumstances for the carrying out of his project.

Here endeth the fifth stage of our legend.

VI

VI

LET us retrace our steps. The reader will recall how the adorable Cheng-Si, daughter of the unfortunate Sun-Yen, had agreed, in order to procure help for her father, to become the victim that the Korean merchants were to offer the hungry monsters of the Yellow Sea.

When the vessel that bore the young girl had reached the open sea and the merchants had finished a session of prayer, they summoned Cheng-Si before them.

"The time for the sacrifice has come," they told her. "Now you may retire, purify your body, put on your most beautiful gown. We will wait for you here."

Cheng-Si obeyed their commands with resignation. She soon appeared on the deck, fresh as a new rose. One might have thought that she was going to her wedding instead of her death.

The traders had prepared a magnificent altar covered with white and bearing curiously carved incense burners. From the midst of the incense arose fragrant blue clouds of myrrh. At each end of the table burned an immense candle, the flames from which flickered to and fro in the breeze.

The girl was stationed between the two candles, in front of the incense burners. The merchants knelt and began to pray. Cheng-Si, the fair, consigned her soul to Heaven. Not that she experienced regret at leaving this life, but her last thoughts were of the blind father whom she had forsaken.

Her prayers concluded, the girl, without showing a trace of emotion, threw herself resolutely into the sea while the vessel continued on its way. Cheng-Si, who fully expected to drown in a few minutes, perceived with astonishment that she was resting on the surface of the water. In her plunge she had struck an obstacle and this obstacle was nothing else than a gigantic sea turtle. The animal kept on swimming, without seeming to be incommoded by his unusual burden. The young girl naturally seized this unlooked for chance of salvation. She allowed herself to be borne by the turtle and soon she enjoyed such a feeling of security that she fell asleep and a vision came to her. Her mother appeared before her, borne on the fleecy sheets of a cloud, and left with her these words:

"My daughter, be not afraid. Heed what I have to say to you and, above all things, follow my advice. Do not forsake the turtle who has saved your life until he has carried you safely to the shore." With this message, the vision vanished.

Upon awakening, Cheng-Si glanced about her in

all directions and noticed an island in the near distance. "Doubtless that is to be my future home," she said to herself. "My dream is already beginning to come true. I shall follow my dear mother's advice."

The turtle, arriving close to the shore, turned aside into a deep subterranean passage and kept on swimming for several hours until it reached a point where the channel was very narrow. The innocent Cheng-Si jumped ashore crying:

"Thank you, good turtle, for saving my life."

While the large animal turned and swam back toward the sea the girl tried to comprehend the situation in which she found herself. Amidst the deep darkness she was seized with a great fear. "Alas!" she cried, "poor me! I have escaped death only for a little while. How can I get out of this cave?" Suddenly she saw a ray of sunlight that filtered through the rocky vault above her head. She turned in this direction and saw two small polished stone flasks which shone in the sunlight. Lying conspicuously close by was a letter addressed to Cheng-Si herself. The young girl had had so many adventures in so short a time that this strange coincidence did not cause her any surprise. Breaking the seal on the letter, she read the following:

"Drink the contents of these two bottles. One of them will wash away the fatigue of your long voyage.

The other will clarify your ideas about the strange events which no doubt have troubled you."

Cheng-Si drank the two beverages and she immediately felt a renewed energy flowing through her veins. Her head was as clear as a bell. She picked her way carefully along the sides of the cavern in the direction whence the sunlight came. Her way was soon blocked by a pile of dirt which she painfully dug aside with her own hands. Presently she had made an opening large enough to admit her slender body. Drawing herself up through the hole she found that she was in the hollow trunk of an immense tree whose roots reached way down into the floor of the cave.

Cheng-Si enjoyed to the fullest measure the dazzling bright daylight. She was in an enchanted garden. Not only were there trees of luxuriant green foliage, spreading gorgeous blossoms caressed by the soft, sweet breath of variegated butterflies, and bees and birds, but the air itself was laden with an intoxicating perfume. A huge wall served to close the garden from outside view. In the centre arose a magnificent dwelling which harmonized nicely with its surroundings.

After a few minutes rest, Cheng-Si picked her way carefully through the briars and brambles covering the trunk of the tree and began to stroll about the garden.

Now it so happened that the beautiful house and this fairy garden were the residence and place of recreation for the young King whom Ja-Jo-Mi, the unscrupulous, in his wickedness, had exiled, as we have previously seen. His captivity had already lasted for several months. The young Prince, giving himself up to a bitter melancholy, could not take his thoughts from the memory of his parents. Ceaselessly he thought of his father and his mother, both of whom had shown him such tender affection. At times he would ponder over the future where he could see no issue from the plight in which he found himself but death.

"Why should I cling to life any longer? This everlasting loneliness, is it not the most cruel of punishments? Yes, it is better to die," mourned the young Prince so sadly that at his approach even the birds stopped singing.

This very day he was determined to carry out his dismal plans. He carefully made all his preparations. A rope tightly attached to the bough of a tree at one end with the other end passed around his neck would be his instrument of deliverance. The poor victim of Ja-Jo-Mi said his last prayers. In a few minutes his body would be swinging into space. But the Prince hesitated. He had just seen a young girl, a beautiful vision in white, strolling along the shady paths of his garden.

"Who in the world can that be?" queried the Prince. "It seems that I am not here all alone, after all. I must solve this mystery."

He forgot his plans of suicide; his melancholy mood disappeared. A single glimpse of a woman had had this potent effect on him—believe it or not. He untied the cord from about his neck and started in headlong pursuit after the charming apparition. 'Twas effort wasted! The girl turned around a tree and vanished as if by magic.

The young Prince was sorely perplexed. He questioned whether he was not dreaming. But no, his eyes had clearly seen. Later on, when the curtain of twilight began to lower its darkness the prisoner entered his house to seek slumber but all night long he was haunted by the memory of the girl he had seen in his garden and he could not sleep.

Almost before daybreak, he dressed in great haste and left the house. A butterfly hovered about his head. He tried to catch it but could not. He stubbornly gave chase, following it in its many turns and wanderings about the garden. Suddenly the insect disappeared in the hollow trunk of a tree. The young man had closely watched the insect's flight, and feeling certain now of capturing his prey, he advanced with open hands. He expected to find a butterfly, and, behold, he discovered a beautiful young girl before him. So great was his surprise

that he recoiled for a moment, but quickly suppressing this instinctive impulse, he went toward her, saying:

"Excuse me, for having disturbed you in your retreat. I stumbled upon it purely by accident. I was chasing a butterfly that took refuge in the trunk of this tree, and in trying to catch it I came upon you."

Cheng-Si needed these words to reassure her. At the sight of the young man she was seized with an unusual fear. Her agitation prevented her from speaking, but the young King continued:

"I am very sorry to have troubled you. Calm yourself. May I ask where you live?"

"I have no parents, or home, sir. I was walking by the seashore when I fell into the water. A turtle caught me on his back and carried me to this island where I have been for several days."

"Like you, I am an orphan," the Prince went on. "I am a son of the late King of Korea. After my father's death I was banished to this island by the Prime Minister, Ja-Jo-Mi. Both of us have been unfortunate it seems. But, wouldn't you like to come and rest yourself for awhile in my house?"

"Thank you very much. But as you are a prisoner you are not free to allow this, are you?"

"Be at ease about that. It is quite true that I am a prisoner, but no one disturbs my lonely life. They think that behind these high thick walls, outside of

which they have stationed a number of soldiers, it would be useless to inflict upon me other guards or restrictions. You can follow me fearlessly. Come, it will rest you a bit."

Cheng-Si followed the young man. Hand in hand they went toward the exile's home, exchanging very few words.

"Here, this will be your room," said the young King. "I will leave you to make yourself at home."

Cheng-Si, once alone, reflected upon what had happened to her. "This young man is charming and very likable," was her thought. "Like me, he has undergone great hardships."

As for Ki-Si, he had totally forgotten that only a short time before he had planned to take his own life. He could think of nothing but his beautiful guest. He was drawn from his meditation by the arrival of the servant who came each day to bring his food.

"Good," said the young King. "Place it on that table and leave me. I shall serve myself to-day."

When the servant had gone, Ki-Si went for the girl.

"Will you share my meagre dinner?" he asked.

"Gladly, sir."

They seated themselves and began to eat.

"How happy I am to take my repast in your company," said the young Prince.

"Why, sir, how is that?"

"Because I have been here alone for so long."

"Yes, I should think it must be very dreary for you."

When the meal was over they went for a walk in the garden, the King meanwhile relating all his troubles to Cheng-Si, who was greatly moved thereby, and said:

"Do not take things too hardly, my friend. Have patience. Later, when you regain the throne, you will forget these unhappy days."

"No," said the young man. "There will be no throne for me. Ja-Jo-Mi will have me killed."

Cheng-Si gave him a little pat on the cheek and said,

"Don't be sad, my friend. Cheer up. The future will smile upon you."

Several weeks passed. One afternoon, the two went to sit down upon a bench in the garden, as was their custom. The young Prince laughed scornfully, as he pointed out to Cheng-Si the graves scattered here and there in the sun-kissed grass.

"Why are you laughing like that?" she questioned.

"Why," he replied absently, and as if speaking in a trance. "I am laughing when I think that life is nothing more than a long mockery of bitterness and sorrow and lasts so briefly after all. Like the flies

that spend their lifetime in a single sun's ray, we live but a moment. We strive for honors and glory and what not. And to what purpose, since death gathers all of us under a common shroud and places us on an equality. Friendship and love alone can bind mankind to one another."

Then he was silent. The contrast between his own sentiments and the aspect of Nature was striking. The most profound sadness filled his heart. Everything out-of-doors on the contrary seemed to be dancing in a delightful frolic of love.

Ki-Si, his head close to the pearly shell-like ear of Cheng-Si, continued:

"See that butterfly yonder! He is robbing that little white flower. Perhaps he is intoxicated with its perfume; perhaps he is leaving a kiss on its rosy lips? Ah, these insects are happier than we mortals."

Cheng-Si was pensive. She was thinking of the many troubles that had made the young Prince esteem life so lightly. But she said to herself that if he could so easily detect love and the loveable in Nature, his soul could not be entirely immune to the sentiment itself. Possibly she was beloved by her companion.

She said to him merrily, "Chase away your sorrow. You will not always be unhappy. As the

Spring-time follows Winter, so laughter follows tears. Soon the moon will be shining, for the moon loves the sun and will pursue it into the darkness of night. When it rains the earth is refreshed and gladdened."

The sun was sinking below the horizon in a blaze of gold and glory. Everything marked the hour of rest and peace. The birds were flying to their nests, shaking the branches in their flight. A great silence lay over all Nature. The young Prince took Cheng-Si's delicate little hand in his and murmured,

"I love you."

"I love you," was the girl's answer.

After this tender confession, the two remained for a long time without saying a word, buried in a deep revery, happy in their mutual love.

When they had gone home and had finished their evening repast, Ki-Si said to the young girl:

"It is customary in our country for parents to give their children in marriage, but we are orphans, so what shall we do to get married?"

"Let's marry ourselves," replied Cheng-Si, naively.

"Good, let's get ready for the ceremony."

They drew up a large table and covered it with a red cloth. Two candles—signifying youth; a needle and thread—signifying union; and incense burners, were placed on this improvised altar before which

the betrothed pair knelt to pray to Heaven, after which they drank the sacramental wine from the same cup.

The ceremony was over. Love soon invited them to its wedding joys and the following days were filled with an ineffable happiness and delight.

Now it came to pass one night that the Prince had a dream. He saw in his dream a large bottle the upper portion of which had been broken, whence a crimson stream was slowly flowing. Ki-Si awoke with a start and aroused his companion. "Ja-Jo-Mi is going to kill me," he cried with a sob. "I shall be forced to desert you, soul of my soul. Listen to my dream."

Cheng-Si, too, fell a victim to despair. "Let's save ourselves while we can," she cried. "We will set fire to our house and try to reach the seacoast. Ja-Jo-Mi will believe that you are dead."

"No," vetoed the King. "It will be futile. I have had a dream which tells me of misfortune which I shall try in vain to escape."

"But, I think," rejoined Cheng-Si, who had regained her composure, "that you are wrong to be so alarmed at this dream. It does not have the meaning which you attribute to it. When one breaks the neck of a bottle one holds it carefully by the bottom. This means that your people are determined to con-

vey to you their good wishes, and the blood which trickles from the bottle signifies the royal purple with which you will be vested."

This explanation assuaged Ki-Si's griefs but imperfectly. Nevertheless he said to Cheng-Si:

"Well, suppose we leave. Let the fire burn up this place. I have spent too many sad days here."

Placing burning brands in various parts of the house they hurried into the garden. They made their way to the hollow tree where Ki-Si had discovered his treasure and through it descended into the cave. Shortly they were by the seaside.

How could they go any farther? They had no boat. The young King, rather than fall alive into the hands of Ja-Jo-Mi, determined to kill himself. He ran toward the water but Cheng-Si like a flash seized her husband by his gown and showered upon him gentle reproaches:

"Why would you desert me? Is it not my duty to follow you wherever you may go, even to the bottom of the sea? If you are bound to die, let us die together."

"No, my dear, you are young. I met you by chance. It is not fitting that your fate should be thus linked to mine. Life for you may yet be a happy one. Let me go. Let me die alone."

But Cheng-Si clung desperately to her lover. She

wanted to follow him into the Valley of the Shadows; in fact, she would have preferred to have preceded him into the Darkness.

Here endeth the sixth stage of our legend.

VII

VII

SAN-SYENG had been waiting impatiently for several months for an opportunity to penetrate the defenses of the island of Cho-To where the young King was exiled. He was beginning to feel discouraged when he had another dream. San-Houni appeared before him saying, "You should take a boat and go to the southern cape of the island. There you will find the King and his Queen. But make haste, if you are too late you will find that the Prince has gone to abide with his ancestors."

On the strength of his dream, San-Syeng immediately began preparations for his journey to the spot that had been indicated to him. While yet some distance from the island, he could distinguish on the beach a man and woman, both apparently very young, talking and gesticulating with great earnestness. Soon he imagined he could catch a few words which were carried to him on the light breeze, causing the impression that a disagreement had arisen between the two young people. When he came within hailing distance he called politely: "Why are you quarreling in this way when Spring-time is smiling upon you so sweetly?"

Ki-Si replied: "We would like to cross the sea but having no boat and deprived of all resources, we are contemplating suicide. But I do not want my gentle companion to follow me to the grave, while she, on the other hand, is bent upon dying with me. That is the cause of our dispute."

"Give up your melancholy ideas," remonstrated San-Syeng. "You are not going to die. I will place my boat at your disposal and take you wherever you want to go."

"Many thanks, you have saved our lives," cried Ki-Si, joyfully.

The young King and Queen immediately clambered aboard the boat and San-Syeng made a rapid trip over the arm of the sea which separated the island of Cho-To from the city of Chang-Yang.

When they were safely ashore, Ki-Si inquired of San-Syeng if he would kindly direct him to a place where he and his wife could pass the night. San-Syeng suggested that they put up at the same inn where he was staying—an invitation which they heartily accepted.

So far San-Syeng's dream had been realized. Nothing was left for him to do but to make sure that the young people were really those of whom San-Houni had told him. But this was no easy thing. He did not dare question them too closely.

There was too much at stake to reveal the truth. San-Syeng resolved to wait until time and opportunity would dispel his doubt.

Meantime, the house on the island where the young Prince had lived since he had left the Capital had become food for the fire and flame. The guard in charge of Ki-Si rushed to inform the General whom Ja-Jo-Mi had appointed to watch the island of Cho-To. The General, greatly agitated and worried, gave orders to double the guards about the garden wall. Anyone who sought to leave was to be arrested on the spot. Other soldiers were instructed to do their utmost in fighting the spread of the flames. They were too late. The house was now like unto a gigantic furnace.

"Search everywhere for the King," ordered the General. "If he isn't dead he must be hidden somewhere in the garden. Look in all the corners and dark places."

This hunt was, as we well know, unsuccessful, and the General, concluding that the royal prisoner had perished in the flames, sent word to that effect posthaste to Ja-Jo-Mi.

Upon receipt of this news, the Prime Minister was elated. The death of the rightful King swept aside the last obstruction in the path of his plans. He immediately summoned the General whom he had

placed in command of the guards at Cho-To, and when the latter came Ja-Jo-Mi met him with these words:

"How lucky we are! Such an event deserves to be celebrated in proper style. Let's have a grand banquet to which we can invite all our friends."

Ja-Jo-Mi's partisans were living in idleness and ease, wallowing in an era of merry-making and debauchery. Everywhere they went they continually sang the praises of Ja-Jo-Mi, "the coming King of Korea." The people, however, were grumbling and commenting, but the fear of the tyrant kept them from expressing too openly their complaints.

Ki-Si, whom Ja-Jo-Mi believed to be dead, was keeping under cover at the little town of Chang-Yang. One day when he was chatting with San-Syeng, the proprietor of the inn burst in upon them excitedly, saying: "There is great excitement in the streets. Quite a number of troops, who are on their way to the Capital, have just arrived in town."

"What's exciting about that?" questioned San-Syeng.

"These soldiers were ordered to guard our young exiled King at the island of Cho-To. It seems that the poor Prince lost his life in a big fire and the General, who had charge of this mission, is bringing back his men. The people, you know, fairly hate Ja-Jo-Mi, who holds the support of the army and who has placed a heavy yoke about the neck of all

Korea. Hence, at the sight of these soldiers, excitement has spread all over the town."

"Do you hate Ja-Jo-Mi, too?" asked San-Syeng of the inn-keeper.

"The same as every one else, sir."

"Well, it doesn't seem an easy matter to me to overthrow this Ja-Jo-Mi. He has the army with him and they haven't much love for the common people."

"That's where you are wrong, sir. The only troops really devoted to the Prime Minister's cause are those at the Capital; in fact, the others are hostile to him. Why, the garrison of our town and the Mandarin himself are opposed to Ja-Jo-Mi. If our Mandarin were to appeal to the soldiers who are here and if his example were followed by the other Mandarins, Ja-Jo-Mi and his satellites could easily be put down."

"But once Ja-Jo-Mi is deposed, whom can they place upon the throne?"

"That, sir, is a difficult question. Unhappily, the King's son is dead. Perhaps, however, a member of the Royal Family might be found who would accept the trust."

"And suppose, for the sake of argument, that it were not true that the King's son were dead?"

"The simplest thing would be to confer upon him the succession to his father."

"Your reasoning is good," continued San-Syeng.

"You stand well in the eyes of the people and you are a friend of the Mandarin. Would you consent for us to undertake the enterprise?"

"Willingly," replied the innkeeper. "We should get together on this. I must, however, leave you now for a while. I'll see you presently."

When he was alone with Ki-Si, San-Syeng asked: "Would you like to join us in our fight against Ja-Jo-Mi?" At the question the Prince, who had seemed afflicted with great uneasiness and a sort of illness during the preceding conversation, fell to the floor in a faint. San-Syeng turned his attention at once to the prostrate form of his friend who lay as rigid as a log and seemed to be unable to utter the least sound. San-Syeng called Cheng-Si and she came running in terror to her husband. San-Houni's son told her what had taken place. The young woman threw herself on her husband's breast and drenched him with her tears. San-Syeng, profoundly moved by this sight, cried to Cheng-Si: "In Heaven's name, madame, tell me who you are!"

"I have great confidence in you, sir. You have saved our lives and I will tell you the truth. My husband is Ja-Jo-Mi's victim, the King's son. I met him by chance. I fell into the sea and was carried by a turtle to the island where the Prince was held captive. I became his wife and we fled from our prison together and you met us, rescued us, and

brought us here. That's our story. And, now you understand, sir, do you not?"

Meanwhile the young King had regained consciousness. When San-Syeng observed this he began to withdraw toward the door saying: "Sire, forgive my imprudence—excuse my impatience—."

Ki-Si tried to stop him.

"No, sire, first of all you must pardon the familiarity with which I treated you. My excuse is that I did not know with what august personages I was speaking. Now that I do know, it is hardly fitting that I remain in the same room as yourselves."

It happened that the owner of the inn was passing before the door of the room where Ki-Si and his wife were and San-Syeng promptly told him the story. The innkeeper prostrated himself and, with his face to the floor, cried: "It is a supreme honor to be permitted to house Your Majesties."

He lost no time in telling the Mandarin, who was thunderstruck with amazement and who could scarcely suppress his joy at hearing the news. Summoning an escort of troops, he marched to the inn where the King lodged. The soldiers surrounded the house, while the Mandarin, in all the glory of his gorgeous robes, went to pay his respects to the Sovereign.

The Prince gave him a hearty welcome. By his

side stood San-Syeng, who, after bowing to the King, turned to the Mandarin and said: "We must take our Sovereign to the To-Wan (the Mandarin's palace, or town hall) so that he may be sheltered by a roof worthy of his rank."

The Mandarin approved this suggestion, and at once the party set out for the To-Wan.

Hardly was he there before the King turned to San-Syeng, saying: "I wish to bring about a complete re-organization of the Government."

"Sire, all my ability, all my strength, are at your disposal," was San-Syeng's respectful reply.

"Good, then you become my General!" replied the Prince.

San-Syeng was confused, but had to obey the wishes of the Prince and he knew the latter would confer offices only upon those whom he deemed the most worthy among his followers. Orders were issued for the preparation of a great banquet and for the dispatch of couriers to all corners of the Kingdom to announce to the people the coming of their King.

This welcome news put joy and happiness into the hearts of the Koreans, and shouts of joy were heard throughout the length and breadth of the land.

"O Beloved King! Night has vanished to give place to the day. The times of wretchedness and evil are gone and the era of happiness is at hand.

Clouds were hiding the face of the Sun, and the flowers, deprived of light, were wasting away; but the wind has swept away the clouds and the light comes to us again. Everything will flourish in the gentle, healthful rays of the wonderful Sun. Hail, son, hail brother—hail to our King! Forward! Hold back—not for fire, nor for the waters, nor for the mountains. Sweep aside all obstacles. If the wicked-hearted seek to restrain you, kill them. But look ever to the Sun; its warmth will give you strength and courage. We want you—beloved King! And we will serve you and keep you always. Now—away with tender things and soft things—we're off to war!"

While the populace was manifesting its delight in talk and other harmless ways, the King was busy with his preparations for the overthrowing of the usurper. He questioned San-Syeng as to the distance to the Capital. This distance was considerable and, at the advice of his General, he decided that he would put his forces on the march as soon as possible.

San-Syeng took an active interest in the training of the army. To toughen his men, he made them attach small, but heavy, bags of sand to their legs. For an entire day they were obliged to march with this equipment.

The following day, the army broke camp and took the field. The soldiers now having only their wea-

pons to carry, made rapid progress. At the end of two days they were before the Capital City. San-Syeng stationed his troops in a cordon about the city with orders to let no one—no matter who it might be—leave or enter the town. Then he wrote an ultimatum, which he ordered to be copied many times on strips of bamboo, and distributed widely in all parts of the city. This proclamation announced the arrival of the legitimate King at the head of his army and that His Majesty came to give battle to the unfaithful Minister, Ja-Jo-Mi, the unscrupulous. The latter was living in an atmosphere of absolute security. Entertainment followed entertainment; feast followed feast. Suddenly it was announced to Ja-Jo-Mi that the King's son was at the gates of the Capital with an army and that there was a great disturbance among the people.

Ja-Jo-Mi, astounded by the news, summoned his General, at whom he cast the most violent reproaches and profane oaths (some of these we dare not print as the transcriber of this legend is a pious man). "How is it that you told me that the King's son was dead and now they say that the city is in a state of siege? Who is it that is at the head of the troops who are attacking us?"

"It cannot possibly be the King's son," replied the General, humbly. "I am positive that he died in

that fire—his body is ashes. Doubtless it is some daring adventurer who has brought this horde of rogues and robbers upon us."

There was no time for further discussion. The populace, having read the bamboo messages, arose in revolt. They were already advancing toward the Prime Minister's palace. They burst down the doors and swept through the palace like the demon waves of the Yellow Sea. Ja-Jo-Mi and his General were seized—the palace set on fire. Simultaneously the King made a peaceful entry into the city at the head of his troops and the people turned over to him the usurping Minister and his General.

Ki-Si called his Commander-in-Chief, San-Syeng.

"No one shall be put to death. It will be sufficient, for the time being, to throw the guilty wretches into prison." Subsequently, he issued orders to the effect that only Ja-Jo-Mi, his General, and their principal adherents, be held as prisoners.

The new King had barely taken possession of the palace of his fathers than he ordered a reduction in the taxes which were oppressing his people. These measures were approved by his Queen who desired that they be even carried further.

"Who knows," she said, "if the Mandarins will carry out the orders; perhaps they will continue to persecute the people to their profit? You must be

assured that everything is going as you wish and dispatch deputies who are charged with seeing that your decrees are observed."

The King recognized the wisdom of this idea and ordered San-Syeng to send out in all directions honest and devoted men on this errand. This done, the new General left the Capital, wearing the modest clothes he had worn when the King had placed the command of the troops in his hands.

Here cometh to a close the seventh stage of our legend.

VIII

VIII

SAN-SYENG had been a very powerful factor in establishing the legitimate sovereign of Korea on the throne but he did not by any means consider his life work as finished. His primary duty was to find his parents and to return to the lovely girl to whom he had given his heart. Despite the many adventures through which he had passed, he had never ceased thinking of Yeng-So-Yei. He did not suspect that serious events were also taking place in her own little sphere.

Now it came to pass one morning after San-Syeng's departure that Yeng-So-Yei found her mother dead in her room. The poor young woman was prostrated with grief. She refused to be consoled and the solitude in which she lived merely aggravated her anguish. And yet a new calamity lay right in her path. The populace, rising in revolt against the nobility and tax collectors, were burning and pillaging throughout the village and Yeng-So-Yei just had time enough to dash through a secret gate in the city wall and make her escape into the open country.

In a short space of time she had lost her mother, her fortune and her home. She did not, however,

feel entirely cast down. "At least San-Syeng is left to me," was her thought.

"I shall go to the Capital and hunt for him." In order to carry out her project more easily, she assumed masculine attire and, thus disguised, set out on her journey.

Now it came to pass that having no notion of the road she should follow, she completely lost her way. Moreover, an intense fog settled down upon the fields and earth to make her situation more unpleasant. She walked and walked, but to her great despair she met no one, nor could she find the slightest shelter wherein she might escape the dampness. Tired, almost unto death, she threw herself down beside a clump of tall bamboo, intending to rest but a few moments, but in spite of her well-meaning resolutions, she was soon fast asleep.

The grove of bamboo toward which Fate had turned the steps of Yeng-So-Yei was the very one where so many long years before Yeng-Si had given birth to San-Syeng. The unfortunate woman who was obliged to abandon her child and to become a nun would often visit the spot which brought back such painful memories; indeed, she seemed to take a keen pleasure in seeing the spot where she had become a mother. And the sight thereof would cause her to weep.

It so happened that one day the nun, returning

from her sad pilgrimage, saw a young man, sound asleep, stretched across the narrow footpath. At first she was a bit startled and frightened but, conquering her distrust, she gazed curiously at the sleeper. "My son would have been about the same age," she reflected. "I will wait until this young man awakes and speak with him." She stood by his prostrate form and it seemed as if she were unable to take her eyes from his face. Finally, unable to be patient any longer, and after satisfying herself that no one was watching her, she decided to wake the strange traveler.

"Pardon my curiosity, sir—but this situation is a strange one."

"What situation?" demanded Yeng-So-Yei.

"How comes it that you are sleeping here on this road?"

"It comes—because I was very tired."

"Where do you live?"

"At Yen-Yu, but I am on my way to the Capital."

"To the Capital? But you are not on the right road."

"Am I lost? Oh, what shall I do?"

Tears came into the poor girl's eyes. Yeng-Si was moved also.

"How," she asked again, "does it happen that you are traveling alone in this way? It is hardly safe for you."

"I know that, but I am forced to do so for I am an orphan."

"Would you like to come with me?"

"Yes, but I can accept your hospitality for a short time only. I must be on my way."

At these words, they walked together toward the temple of Ro-Ja.

Ou-Pung, the sister, consented to take the young traveler in, but made it very plain that it was impossible for her to keep a man about the house for more than two or three days.

Yeng-So-Yei asked no more than that. After she was installed in her room, she went to seek Yeng-Si. The latter related the tale of her sad life and this pitiful story so touched the young woman that she wept with her new friend in sympathy.

The next morning Yeng-Si stopped at the traveler's room. Picking up a ring which she saw lying on the table, she examined it closely and demanded, sharply:

"Perhaps, I may be a bit inquisitive, but I would be very much obliged to you if you would tell me where you obtained this ring?"

"It is a keepsake from my best friend."

"Where is your best friend?"

"He has gone to the Capital. I want to join him as soon as I can."

"How old is he?"

"We are almost the same age—both of us. But why do you ask these questions?"

Yeng-Si did not reply, at once. Her eyes filled with tears, and suddenly she broke out, sobbing:

"My son! My poor son! Where are you?"

These words made a vivid impression on Yeng-So-Yei. "Can it be that this poor woman is my husband's mother?" she thought to herself.

She tenderly took her tearful companion in her arms and asked gently,

"Was your son called San-Syeng?"

At the sound of this name, Yeng-Si, more agitated than before, cried:

"Yes, that was the name I gave him and I personally inscribed the name of San-Syeng on my baby's arm in characters that could not be removed. This ring, which I hold in my hand, I placed in his clothes when I was obliged to abandon him."

"Mother, my dear mother," cried Yeng-So-Yei, throwing herself in Yeng-Si's arms. "Your son is my husband and I am on my way to find him."

"Do my ears hear aright?" cried Yeng-Si. "But, what in the world does this costume mean?"

"I put it on so as to be able to travel with more security."

The two women embraced each other tenderly,

mingling their warm tears. Ou-Pung, the sister, who was passing outside, hearing the sound of sobs, entered the room.

"What are you crying about?" she asked.

"Good friend, we have been showing hospitality not to a young man, but to the wife of my own lost son," replied Yeng-Si.

"How happy I am for your sakes!"

Yeng-So-Yei then explained to the nun why she had assumed the garb of a man.

"You were right," rejoined the sister, "but what motive impelled you to leave the town where you were living?"

The young wife briefly told the story of her misfortune. She was now more anxious than ever to find her husband and she wasted few words in her recital.

"I shall find him easily," she added, "no matter how changed he may be. He has probably kept the horse which I gave him when he left me and if I cannot recognize the husband, I will know my father's horse."

"Well," said the nun to Yeng-Si, "the end of all your sorrows is at hand. Follow your daughter and together you will find San-Syeng."

"Yes, it will not be our fault if we do not find him."

Accustomed to having lived together for so long,

Yeng-Si and the sister experienced keen regret at parting from each other. But Ou-Pung was the first to suggest that Yeng-Si leave with her daughter-in-law for she was happy at the good fortune which had come to her deserving companion.

So it came to pass that Yeng-Si and Yeng-So-Yei set out together for the Capital. When they came close to the grove of bamboo, San-Syeng's mother could not suppress her tears.

"Why are you crying so, mother?"

"It was here, my child, that seventeen years ago I gave birth to him who is now your husband. A short distance from here I abandoned him to go with Ou-Pung, the nun. These recollections pain me greatly."

The two women continued on their way. After several hours' walking, they came to the shores of a wide lake. Yeng-Si paused by the water's edge, and raising her eyes to Heaven, cried in a weak and trembling voice:

"Dear and unfortunate friend, what has become of you?"

She told Yeng-So-Yei of the sublime devotion of the woman, who had enabled her to escape from the hands of Su-Rung.

During the few following days their trip was without incident until they came to the town of San-Jon. Here they resolved to remain for a day as

they were fatigued by their journey and they entered the first inn which they stumbled upon.

The inn-keeper's son was at once smitten by Yeng-So-Yei who was, as we know, a marvel of grace and beauty. Finding his attentions repulsed, he resolved to obtain revenge—the mark of a small mind. One of the maid-servants was ordered to place in the young wife's apartment some jewels which belonged to the young man. The thing was done without difficulty—and the servant swore under threats of punishment that she would tell the plot to no one.

Next morning the rejected suitor entered Yeng-So-Yei's room, saying:

"Madame, you will pardon me? Some one has stolen my jewels. I have searched in all the other rooms of the house and I ask your permission to do the same in yours."

"Willingly, sir."

It can be readily imagined that the two women were greatly astonished to see the young man discover in their rooms, as if by magic, the jewels which he claimed had been stolen from him. They asserted that they were innocent, but it was useless. They were arrested in the name of the Mandarin and were taken before him for a preliminary examination.

They renewed vigorously their denials, the Mandarin meanwhile listening attentively. He had been

impressed by the singular beauty of Yeng-So-Yei, but gave no visible evidence of it, and committed the two women to prison. A few moments after, he had word brought to them that if Yeng-So-Yei would consent to marry him, no mention would ever be made of the theft. In case of refusal—it was to be —death.

The young wife spurned the Mandarin's messenger with great indignation.

"Tell your master that he is a villain. I am married and I will never be unfaithful to my husband, not even to escape torture and death."

The Mandarin, very much irritated, gave orders that the execution of the prisoners should take place in three days. The keeper of the prison, who was also the executioner, went about his sinister preparations. Keenly touched by the plight of the two women, he visited them and said:

"I shall be very glad to render you any service that you ask. I am obliged to obey the commands of the Mandarin, but I do not hesitate to say that he is one of the vilest of men."

The jailer's voice trembled as he spoke. Yeng-Si and her daughter-in-law, torn with anguish, were wailing and sobbing. Was it thus that they were to leave the world—one without having seen her son—the other without embracing her husband?

"Oh, my San-Syeng! Oh, my San-Syeng!" they cried. Their grief was so poignant that it overmastered their strength and they lost consciousness.

Here the eighth stage of our legend cometh to a close.

IX

IX

ON leaving the Capital, San-Syeng had a threefold mission in view: to make certain of the faithful execution of the King's commands, to find his parents, and to rejoin his wife. The young man did not make light of the difficulties that lay before him, but he resolved to bend all his efforts toward accomplishing his heart's desires. He was optimistic and cherished the brightest hopes of having his wishes crowned with success.

His adorable Yeng-So-Yei obviously had the first claim to his attention, and he set out with haste to see her. When but a short distance from the town of Yen-Yu where his wife dwelt, the new General learned that the place had been given over to revolt and pillage. San-Syeng immediately mobilized the royal troops from the neighboring towns and order was restored in a few days. The Mandarin, whose exactions had been the primary cause of the revolt, was arrested and sent to the Capital together with the ring-leaders in the disturbance.

This task accomplished, San-Syeng made pleasant preparations to surprise Yeng-So-Yei by his homecoming. Alas the house where he expected to find

his beautiful little wife had been burned to the ground, as if blasted by a dragon's fiery breath. He could not master his sorrow and burst into sobs. His orderly, who accompanied him, endeavored to console him, but in vain, and was at last obliged to lead his master away from the heap of charred embers and ashes. He learned that Yeng-So-Yei's mother was dead and that the orphan, when the fire broke out, had fled and no one could tell whither she had gone.

San-Syeng naturally determined to travel in search of his wife, but his body was tired and weary and he resolved to indulge in the luxury of a short nap before leaving the town. During his slumbers, San-Houni appeared before him for the third time, saying:

"My poor child! You are looking for your parents and you are unable to find them. It is now time to tell you that I am your father. In the olden days I enjoyed a great deal of influence at the Court, but my enemy, Ja-Jo-Mi, had me sent into exile, with my best friend, Sun-Yen. I was murdered by Su-Rung whom I hired to take me to Ko-Kum-To. As for your mother and your wife, you will find them at San-Jon. A cruel Mandarin has condemned them to death. Hurry to their rescue; the slightest delay may be fatal."

San-Syeng awoke with a start, shook himself and

started on his journey. Presently he reached the town referred to in his dream. He was not long in learning that his mother and his wife, unjustly accused of theft, were in a prison cell and were to be put to death the very next morning.

The young man ran to the prison where, of course, he found it impossible to enter, so he had recourse to a wise little trick. He entered a merchant's shop near by, threw his robe over a random object and dashed out of the doorway. He was soon caught, arrested, and thrown into prison.

Before employing this ruse, San-Syeng had ordered his servant to come early the next day with his master's horse and take his place before the prison gates.

The room into which the young man was thrust after his arrest was very dark and small. Several persons were already occupying it but it was too dark to distinguish any of them clearly. He joined one of the inmates in a loud protest for some light —the inevitable result of which would be to bring the jailer, who indeed did come running to see what their outcries portended. He stepped between the two men to quiet them.

"I shall report you to the Mandarin," he declared, turning to San-Houni's son. "What's your name, anyway?"

"San-Syeng."

Yeng-So-Yei and Yeng-Si were naturally very much surprised at hearing this name. They whispered to each other:

"That's my son's name, sure enough," said Yeng-Si, "but it cannot possibly be he for he is no thief."

The night passed without San-Syeng being recognized by the two women. At daybreak, they were startled by the loud neighing of a horse and Yeng-So-Yei, who had gone to the narrow opening which served as a window to their cell, cried:

"Mother, come here. That horse which has been neighing is the very one which I gave my husband, or at least it resembles it very much."

Yeng-Si, by way of reply, moaned:

"Oh, where can my poor son be?"

Thereupon, San-Syeng approached his mother and inquired the cause of her grief. Yeng-Si told him of the many sad experiences she had undergone since her departure into exile with San-Houni up to her arrest and condemnation to death by the Mandarin of San-Jon.

When she had finished, the young man in turn told his story. His concluding words were—"I have on my arm the name of San-Syeng, but I do not know how it is that I bear these characters which I have tried in vain to remove."

Yeng-So-Yei who had been listening to the con-

versation could restrain herself no longer and cried:

"Tell me, what was your wife's name and where did she live?"

"Yeng-So-Yei was my wife's name; she lived in the village of Yen-Yu, but I found her home burned to the ground."

"Oh, my dear San-Syeng," cried the young woman. "Have I found you at last," and turning to Yeng-Si, "Mother mine, here is your son!"

Their greetings naturally consumed some time—their hearts were glad and they were not ashamed to display their emotion. And yet the two women felt bitter and sad to think that soon they were about to die after having touched the threshold of that happiness which their reunion promised. San-Syeng ultimately succeeded in calming them. He enjoyed, he said, certain extraordinary powers of which he intended to make instant use.

Presently the young General's orderly visited his master's prison where he received orders to announce to the village the arrival of San-Syeng, a special envoy of the King, and to arrest the Mandarin at once.

'Twas but a brief while and the orderly came to report to his master that his commands had been carried out. Meantime, the town officials had rushed to the prison where they surrounded San-Syeng and

paid him their homage. At their urging, San-Houni's son left the prison and betook himself to the town-hall.

Yeng-So-Yei, catching sight of the horse she had given her husband, ran to the stately looking steed and imprinted a kiss on the end of its nose. The animal seemed to understand her message, for its eyes as they turned toward the young wife, seemed moist with tears.

"No tears now, my good fellow," laughed Yeng-So-Yei. "You are happier than I for you can continually accompany him whom I love, while I am to be separated from him."

San-Syeng, a witness of his wife's gentle act, tenderly drew her to his heart, and kissing her hair said:

"Henceforth we shall never part from each other."

San-Syeng, his cup overflowing with happiness at having found his mother and his wife at one and the same time, desired to be told about his father, and, at his urgent request, Yeng-Si, with tears in her eyes and a faltering voice, related to him the misfortunes of San-Houni.

"Don't worry, mother dear," pleaded San-Syeng. "After so much suffering, you are going to have happiness in abundance. I shall do everything I can to make life pleasant for you. Suppose that first we go

visit Ou-Pung, the sister, who was so kind to you."

This suggestion was very pleasing to Yeng-Si and they started on their journey to the temple of Ro-Ja. When they were passing by the lake which recalled so many bitter memories, Yeng-Si bade her son to pause. The little party halted while she told the melancholy tale of the devotion of the old lady who had sacrificed herself without hope of recompense or reward.

"Mother," declared San-Syeng, "I am going to place a memorial in this spot to perpetuate the sublime sacrifice of your poor companion." The General's orderly was at once commissioned to employ workmen who were to begin immediately to erect a suitable tribute to the old lady's memory.

Before reaching the shrine of Ro-Ja, Yeng-Si related to her son, while they were passing by the grove of bamboo, which figures so conspicuously in our story, under what pitiful circumstances he had been born.

Ou-Pung, the sister, did not count upon seeing Yeng-Si and her daughter-in-law so soon again. "This is my son," proudly declared the nun's former companion.

San-Syeng showered warm and profuse thanks upon the sister for all the attentions and kindnesses she had shown to Yeng-Si.

"Do not thank me, sir," replied the sister. "I

have only done my duty in sheltering an unfortunate woman. Buddha has taken pity upon her and has rewarded her piety and her long suffering by permitting her to find you."

Under the supervision of the orderly, a magnificent pagoda was rapidly built by the water's edge. Upon it could be read this inscription:

WITH EVERLASTING GRATITUDE TO THE BENEFACTOR OF MY MOTHER.

Ou-Pung consented to go with her visitors to see the temple that had just been completed. San-Syeng had directed that an altar for sacrifices be placed before the pagoda and that Su-Rung be arrested and brought to him. All of the thief's property was to be seized.

This very moment, strange to say, Su-Rung was telling his brother, Su-Yeng, of a peculiar dream he had had the preceding night. He had seen himself surrounded by tongues of flame and his head, severed from his body, was boiling in a large copper kettle.

"It signifies that your end is near and that you will die through the will of man," asserted Su-Yeng. "Why must you continue to lead this sinful life? It would be more fitting that you experience remorse and fear for an envoy of the King is in the neighborhood."

Scarcely had Su-Yeng uttered these words, when there came a loud rapping at the door. After a brief struggle, Su-Rung was reduced to helplessness and securely bound. All the stolen objects that could be found were collected, thrown in a heap, and the party turned their steps toward the pagoda.

When the criminal was brought face to face with the young General, the latter demanded:

"My name is San-Syeng. You know me, don't you?"

Su-Rung, much surprised, could not imagine that his adopted son had been elevated to the dignity of a King's envoy, so he replied, coolly:

"Your name is not unfamiliar to me. My son was called San-Syeng."

"You have a son, then?"

"Yes, he left me three years ago, to go to the Capital and since that day I have had no news of him."

"Well, you may know that I am the man of whom you boast being the father. But I am not the son of a murderer. I have found my mother who has told me about my birth and your infamous crimes. There, do you recognize my mother?" added San-Syeng, indicating Yeng-Si to the brigand with a gesture of his hand.

Yeng-Si, who had been watching Su-Rung attentively for some time, burst out with:

"You vile wretch, so you're still alive! Thank Heaven it is granted me to satisfy my thirst for vengeance. My son, there stands your father's murderer. Kill him, strike him down, with your own hand! I could tear the very eyes from his head!"

San-Syeng's mother was beside herself and he sought to calm her, representing that he had no authority to put any man to death without an order from the King. Yeng-Si did not insist; her mind was crowded with other more charitable thoughts when, in company with her friends, she knelt in the beautiful pagoda to pray for the soul of the martyred woman to whom she owed her life.

Su-Rung was immediately dispatched to the Capital under heavy guard. When the troops and their prisoner were about to depart, San-Syeng, turning to Su-Yeng, said:

"You have always been an honest, loyal man. Take these things which your brother has unlawfully appropriated. They are yours."

"Thank you so much, sir. But I no longer am in need of anything, for I am going to die with my brother."

"What is that? I do not comprehend your decision."

"When a tree is brought to the ground by the woodsman, can the branches continue to live?"

"But if your brother was a criminal, you have nothing to reproach yourself with."

"That may be true, but nevertheless I am determined to leave this life with the brother I have always loved and with whom I have always lived." And San-Syeng found it useless to endeavor to dissuade Su-Yeng from his fatal purpose.

Before returning to the Capital, San-Houni's son visited several more of the provinces, looking after the King's business. When his mission was concluded, he sought audience with the King for the purpose of reporting what he had seen, heard, and done. The Queen was a patient and attentive listener while the young General was telling the story of his adventures. However, when San-Syeng had finished speaking, Cheng-Si, with a sob in her voice, cried:

"Oh, you are so much happier than I!"

Her strength failed her and she slipped from her seat to the floor. Those in the Royal Chamber crowded about the prostrate Queen—at a respectful distance, however—who was not long in regaining her consciousness. Thereupon San-Syeng asked her tenderly, as he bowed before her, what had been the cause of her sudden swoon.

"Alas!" mourned Cheng-Si. "It has been three years since I have seen my father, and in all that time I have had no word of him. That is why I am so sad and down-hearted."

The King and his General assured her that they would use all possible means within their power to find the Queen's father. The Queen's pretty and

shapely head was bowed in deep meditation, when suddenly she cried:

"Well, let's collect all the blind men in the Kingdom; invite them to a big feast. I'm going to give every one of them a little token."

"Majesty," replied San-Syeng, "it shall happen as you have wished."

No time was lost; orders were issued to every Mandarin to send every blind man in his jurisdiction to the Capital. And thus it came to pass that Cheng-Si collected all the blind men of Korea in order to give them a token.

But more anon, for here endeth the ninth step of our legend.

X

X

MANY months had come and gone since the day when the unfortunate and broken-hearted Sun-Yen had seen his daughter pass away to certain death. He led a wretched existence—his strength being sustained only by the promise of the disciple that his sight would be restored to him at the end of three years. But the allotted time had passed and the poor victim of Ja-Jo-Mi, the unscrupulous, had not recovered his sight. His dejection was pitiful to behold, and he awaited with impatience the death that would free him from his constant misery.

Now, one day Sun-Yen was disturbed in the midst of his morbid meditations by the arrival at his poor dwelling of the Mandarin of the province.

"The King," declared this dignitary, "desires to assemble all the blind men of the Kingdom at a banquet. You must go to the Capital."

"My strength will never permit me to make such a long journey," replied Sun-Yen. "As it is, I can scarcely take a few steps from my own door."

"You need not be troubled about that. I will provide you with a horse and guide."

"I thank you from the bottom of my heart, but is it really necessary to spend so much on my account?"

"It is the King's order. Everything is prepared and you can start this very moment."

Sun-Yen was easily persuaded. A few days and he was in the Capital.

At the orders of San-Syeng, an elaborate and tasty feast had been prepared. The ladies of the Court had been instructed to see that nothing was lacking for the comfort of the blind men who had come from all corners of Korea. They watched over them and came to their assistance when—on account of their blindness—they were awkward and clumsy. The banquet was nearing an end when Sun-Yen arrived—tired and travel-stained. The servants led him to one of the ladies who could not conceal a grimace of disgust when she saw him. In fact, the old gentleman did present a very disagreeable appearance to the eye. The lady made a disparaging remark which Sun-Yen overheard and to which he replied:

"I am well aware of what you are saying, but kindly listen to what I have to say. The actions and outer garb of men may differ much, but good hearts and good manners should be in the bosoms of us all. The wicked and crafty often conceal a cowardly and vile disposition beneath a beautiful exterior. People of wisdom pay no attention to form, but probe to

the bottom where kindness and gentleness often abide. When you see an apple that looks attractive but contains a worm, you may contemplate its beauty but you keep your mouth away. Heaven alone is of lasting beauty and nothing beside it matters. I have been deceived by a so-called religious man who had no other intention but a selfish desire to supplant his Master.

"I planted a beautiful fruit tree and it bore a single flower of exquisite beauty and charm. A gust of wind swept this flower toward the sea where it was peacefully rocked in the cradle of the waves. The flower often thought of the poor tree from which it had been stolen and the latter, shorn of its only child, was slowly dying of a broken heart.

"The crescent of the moon seems to emerge from the waters. The fishes are frightened, believing they see a golden hook on a gigantic line which will lift them from their homes in the sea.

"Every month the moon is hidden from our sight for a brief season. Then soon its light reappears in all its wondrous glory. But I, on the contrary, have never seen the light of day since I was stricken by blindness.

"For three years my eyes have shed tears more abundant than the rain which comes from the Heavens. My sighs are sadder than the night wind that whistles through the forest tops."

Concluding, the blind man said, with a sigh: "If my lack of a comely appearance and a rich garb displeases you, put me in a corner by myself, please."

The lady was surprised to hear such profound and poetic speech from the mouth of this old man. She begged his pardon for having treated him with so little respect. At the request of Sun-Yen he was placed at a table by himself.

While he was eating, the lady went to the Queen and repeated to her the strange speech of the blind visitor.

Cheng-Si was very much struck by the recital. She told her impressions to her husband and then expressed a desire to have all the blind men in the Palace pass before her—one by one.

"I wish to make a present to each one," she said.

Immediately, the long file began to form, Sun-Yen being the last of the line. When he stood before the Queen, the lady said:

"Majesty, here is the blind man whose startling words I brought you."

Cheng-Si summoned the old man closer and said to him:

"Why do you express such radical views against our government, our religion and the world?"

"Because, my Queen, the world and religion and the government have caused me evils without number. I was powerful and I was exiled. I had the

best of wives and I lost her. I became blind and my only consolation, a little daughter, was taken away. She furnished a beautiful example of filial love, sacrificing her life on the promise that I would regain my sight. The poor girl is dead and I am still deprived of the light of day."

These words moved Cheng-Si profoundly for in this sordid old man she recognized her father. She uttered a cry.

"Don't you know Cheng-Si?"

"My daughter," stammered Sun-Yen, and instantly his eyes opened and he saw before him the daughter that he had thought forever lost.

The prediction of the disciple was at last fulfilled and under these happy circumstances, shaken by emotion and joy, father and daughter fell into each other's arms.

The King, a witness of this scene—to him incomprehensible—did not delay long in finding out the cause, and he cried:

"Stop the banquet. This requires no witnesses."

When alone with her father and her husband, Cheng-Si told the King the story of her family.

Sun-Yen was completely transformed with delight as he heard his daughter speaking. When she had finished her story he asked, "How did you escape death? How did you come to marry the King?"

So Cheng-Si told her father of her adventures

from the time of her embarkation on the merchant's vessel up to her arrival at the Capital with the King.

"Then," cried Sun-Yen, "it was San-Syeng who saved you?"

"Yes, father."

"What's he doing? Where is he?"

"The King has appointed him General. I shall have him brought to you."

When San-Syeng arrived, Sun-Yen asked him:

"What was your father's name?"

"San-Houni."

On hearing this name, Sun-Yen embraced the young man, crying, "Oh, son of my dearest friend, tell me quickly where your father is."

"Alas, he is no longer in the world. He was exiled when you were, but he was murdered by Su-Rung, the thief, before reaching Ko-Kum-To. He sleeps with his ancestors."

"What, he is dead?" cried the old man, bursting into tears.

San-Syeng's eyes also moistened at the mention of the father whom he had never known.

The King offered them a few words of condolence and said: "You shall be my Prime Minister," indicating Sun-Yen. The old man accepted this responsible charge with a bow and a few well chosen words of gratitude.

"Now, proceed with the banquet," said the Queen.

The other blind men had been informed of what had taken place and a few among them envied the good fortune of Sun-Yen.

"Alas," they cried, "We cannot even see the recipient of this good fortune."

Sun-Yen the benevolent, spoke to them in a gentle tone and in the name of the King invited them to stay several days at the Capital, and the blind men, you may believe, accepted with joy, for they knew they would be well taken care of.

The new Prime Minister was not long in assuming his office. The King constantly summoned him to his councils. Now it came to pass one day that he sent for him and said, "I am intending to lead an army against Jin-Han. My father suffered a severe defeat while attacking that country and it is my duty to avenge him. What do you think of it?"

"Sire," replied Sun-Yen, "May I have permission to reflect upon this matter for a few days before giving you my opinion?"

The same day, San-Syeng questioned the King's father-in-law upon the subject of Ja-Jo-Mi and Su-Rung. The young General was thirsting for revenge. He expected to find Sun-Yen in a similar frame of mind but the Prime Minister spoke to him as he had done to the King.

"You will know my decision in a few days. I must consider this."

When he was alone Sun-Yen considered the problem from every angle.

Although misfortunes a-plenty had been his share, he did not hold any resentment against humanity. He felt a great tolerance for his most bitter enemies. "Of what good is revenge," he thought. "What will it profit us to declare war which sooner or later will bring reprisals?" Inspired by such sentiments, the Prime Minister went to the Sovereign. "Sire," he said, "do you not believe that it would be advisable to know what your subjects think of this war before undertaking the campaign?"

"Assuredly," replied the King. "I would gladly be informed upon that question, but how can we learn the opinion of all the Koreans?"

"That will be very easy, sire. Have a grand meeting of your people here at the Capital. Their sentiment will be the sentiment of the country at large. I shall have a few words to say, and then if you persist in your intentions, we shall begin the war."

The King approved Sun-Yen's suggestion and orders were issued that an immense feast be prepared. Hundreds of tables were decorated and filled with food. The guests were to be divided into five groups: the Royal Family, the Governors, the Army, the common people and the criminals and other unfit. The repast, the first of this kind in all Korea, was a merry one. Before the guests separated, Sun-Yen

asked for silence, and in a powerful voice pronounced the following words:

"By virtue of my office as Prime Minister, I have taken it upon myself to put one question to all of you. Our Master, the King, wishes to undertake an expedition against Jin-Han to avenge his father's defeat. Is this expedition opportune? To me, war is the worst of evils. It causes destruction beyond measure, and it is impossible to count the innocent ones who perish on the battlefield and at home. What is the cause of your heavy taxes if not the need of maintaining a large army?

"With peace all is different. The public welfare increases. Mankind, created to love and not to slaughter, may enter into relations which will increase mutual happiness. Nature furnishes us an example of peace, does it not? When we see a ferocious dog on the highway attacking another dog, incapable of defending itself, we hasten to help the weaker. Why should we be more cruel with our fellow men than with our animals? Perhaps the stronger dog will always seek to oppress the weaker, but are we not superior beings and do we not possess reason which teaches tolerance and mercy to our neighbors? Therefore, it is my opinion, sire, that we should not declare war.

"I do not wish the punishment of our guilty neigh-

bors although several of them have done me a great deal of harm. Let us pardon them. May this example serve as a lesson to those peoples who have similar wicked thoughts."

These words met with unanimous approbation. Every one seemed to be of Sun-Yen's opinion and loud shouts of approval went up from the crowd. "What happiness is ours! We are like the grass which the Springtime brings to life, like the beneficial rain after a long drought." From the tremendous crowd arose cries of gladness which were a token of thanks, a hymn of joy and a fervent prayer for the future of the land.

'Twas a happy epoch for our country. Content reigned everywhere. Under the benevolent influence of Sun-Yen, everybody in Korea worked and lived in peace.

One day the Prime Minister disappeared. He could not be found. Possibly he had been carried to Heaven in a cloud—to his last and well-deserved home with his ancestors.

For it has been proclaimed by The Great Teacher and Venerable Philosopher from the depths of his Wisdom, that all things having the appearance of Evil are transient and that Goodness will overcome and Virtue triumph.

So—having passed through the ten stages of its life—our legend here cometh to an end.

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